

THE PERFIDIOUS WELSHMAN



"DRAIG GLAS"

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THE PERFIDIOUS WELSHMAN

BY

“DRAIG GLAS”

(BLUE DRAGON)

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

For a long time a number of miscellaneous accusations with regard to the Welsh have been floating about, but, not having been reduced to specific form, they have not been specifically denied, and thus they have been allowed to gain a certain currency. The publication of the present volume, concentrating, as it does, the manifold accusations that have been made against the Welsh from various points of view, will furnish protagonists of the Cymric race with an opportunity which they will, no doubt, readily embrace, of repudiating many of the charges which the Author has preferred against Taffy and his kind. It may perhaps be assumed that even the Author himself would have his statements taken *cum grano salis*, and has had in mind the Spanish proverb, "Tell a lie that you may find a truth." Few impartial inquirers are likely to deny that there is a substratum of truth in the Author's statements ; it is for the judicious to sift the wheat from the "chaff."

THE PERFIDIOUS WELSHMAN

PROLOGUE

IT having once been my misfortune to live in Wales for a number of years, I have thought that the contents of this little book—contents which are the impressions received first-hand from my erstwhile neighbours, and here set down in sober earnest—might, perhaps, serve as a timely warning to those who have not suffered my experience. If they decide to leave “Wales to the Welsh,” well and good, but if, on the contrary, they decide to risk the experiment of living at close quarters with Taffy, it will not be my fault if they are made very unhappy.

Perhaps, in making a brief study of the Welsh character as it exists to-day, we should make allowances for the fact that only a comparatively few years ago, according to our historians, the Welsh, when they were the inhabitants of the

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greater part of Britain, were in the very depths of barbarism. When the Anglo-Saxons came to England they found the wild Welshman a little wilder than he is to-day. He was painted with "woad"—his only clothing, we must presume, save for a wreath of oak-leaves, which, strangely enough, he wore around his *head*, and was unashamed. His pastimes consisted chiefly of making human sacrifices, indulging in various forms of cruelty, and drinking a potent and decidedly "heady" brew called mead or *medd*. Everything was ordered by Druids (or the priests), who, themselves exempt from all the trials and hardships of life, waxed fat under their own mistletoe boughs, revelling in the most revolting forms of religious idolatry that have ever been discovered in the barbaric world. To bear these few facts in mind will, as I have said, be helpful in enabling the reader to comprehend the ways of the Welshman as shown in later chapters.

Most unprejudiced people are agreed that the brightest hour in the history of England was that in which the last of the Ancient Britons were driven over the borders to hide in the mountains of Wales—that comparatively insignificant and unimportant part of England which lies between Offa's Dyke and St. George's Channel. They were occupying to no purpose then, as indeed they do now, a fair and beautiful country. And they

Prologue

were dispersed then, as they are being dispersed and superseded to-day, by people more civilised and intelligent than any Welshman can ever hope to be.

No people were ever less fitted to call a country their own and themselves a nation than the Welsh. They have not a single essential factor for the making of a nation. Indeed many authorities contend, with good reason, that Taffy is none other than a low-bred mongrel of Mongolian origin, that he is allied to the inhabitants of the Basque provinces of Spain, to the Magyars, Turks, Tartars, and certain inferior types of French peasantry. And the most casual observer cannot have failed to notice the distinctive traces of this racial origin. Not only have we the Welshman's dialect—it cannot be dignified by the name of language *—which is so obviously a blend of Semitic and other tongues, but the cast of features (most pronounced in the short, dark-haired type of Welshman), inferior intellect, excitability, deceitfulness, and absurd vanity all seem to prove that Taffy is, for the most

* According to one of Mr. Christie Murray's characters—and he is probably right—the Welsh "language" had its origin thus: "Theer's a tale about the Tower of Babel as I misdoubt to be a fable, but it's said as one lad was i' the belief he was talkin' Hebrew theer, but he was chatterin' i' one of the new tongues as was gi'en 'em for their punishment, an' the master-builder waxed that wroth at him he lent him a clout across the mazzard with a trowelful of mortar, an' while he was splutterin' to free his tongue he invented Welsh."

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part, a remnant of the Mongolian race. Welsh "literature," as I shall show later, possesses no intrinsic merit, and is best left unregarded by all readers (even supposing they understand the dialect, as I do) if they have any respect for their time and morals. We have been told that Goronwy Owen's poetical effusions are greater than Chaucer's, that the verses of some one or other of these many bardic heroes whose names have never been heard outside Wales—often not beyond the confines of their own parish—are equal to those of Homer, and such contemptible nonsense. But the visitor to the Principality will always find that the ardent exponent of Goronwy's, or somebody else's, doggerel explains, with an air of superiority which is quite ludicrous, that the "' literature ' loses so much in the translation "; and you conclude that it evidently does lose a very great deal, and pass on wishing it had lost all.

If I could think of one worthy attribute that really belongs to Welshmen as a distinct feature, I would at once give it all its due. But alas ! the most strongly marked characteristic of the Cymric breed is one that is anything but worthy. Do you ask what it is ? Is it his hatred of the Saxon ? his immorality ? his insufferable conceit ? his shocking want of culture in the arts ? his appalling ignorance ? Go and inquire of any English visitor who has rubbed an unfortunate shoulder with

Prologue

Welsh Wales for any length of time, and note the headings of my chapters, observing that the characteristic which is accorded the place of honour is the Perfidious Welshman's intolerable

DECEIT.

CHAPTER I

HIS DECEIT

THE first impression received by the stranger who comes in contact with Taffy is often a favourable one. Do you want a glass of milk ? to shelter from the rain ? to rest ? The cottage door is opened wide, and Mrs. Taffy polishes the seat of the best chair for you with her apron, and pokes the fire into a cheering blaze. She is the very soul of hospitality, will charge you a mere trifle for your glass of milk and nothing at all for the long, thin slices of delightful bread-and-butter. You have a taste for old china, perhaps, or brass candlesticks, or "pot dogs" with quaint blue-and-red blotches on their shiny white bodies. Oh, no ! she could never part with them. Did they not belong to her mother and her mother's mother when the latter was a little child ? In that case, being human, you would not press your desires, and prepare to leave. But just as you are going she changes her mind, and thinks that, "times being so dreadful hard," she would part with the little "lustre" jug for half-a-crown. And taking it down

His Deceit

from the shelf, while you look for the coin, her eyes fill rapidly with tears. It is base sacrilege to exchange the heirloom for a stranger's money! Yet it must be done. Necessity and want win the day. Then you wish that you had never broached the subject at all. It would have been kinder to have given the grief-stricken woman your half-crown. So you press five shillings into her unwilling hand, hoping that the little extra may, in some measure, console her grief. But you only discover, when too late, that the selfsame jug can be bought, and was bought, from the hawking "potter's" cart for threepence halfpenny (or taken in exchange for rabbit-skins); that if you had pressed the bargain you could have had brass candlesticks, pot dogs, and everything else which looked at you through the cottage door from the glistening oaken dresser, and been duped with every one of them. Mrs. Jones, however, is discreet. If her ancestors never possessed these things, they bequeathed to her something far more valuable—a cunning ability to estimate quickly and unerringly her victims' knowledge or innocence in such matters, so that she may ever take advantage of them in the most profitable manner. An enormous trade is done in this way every summer in Wales with these spurious "antiques," and many a hearty laugh may be heard in the pretty whitewashed cottages when the deceived Sassenach has left his money and taken

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away some trumpery article of purely imaginary value. It is a trade whose sole supports are lying and deceit, and it is promoted by a people who spend four-fifths of their ample leisure in reading big Bibles, singing psalms, and going to chapel.

And speaking of Mrs. Taffy's pretended hospitality, I am reminded of another example of the way in which she often manages to delude the stranger. Perhaps you are a visitor, and the accommodation you require for a week or fortnight cannot be vouchsafed. She is very sorry "indeed," but she could oblige you for one night, indicating by her manner that she will gladly suffer being put to no little trouble on your behalf. You accept her kind offer, and soon begin to feel charmed with her affability. In fact, you are made quite one of the family party. On leaving you are pressed to call again when passing that way, which may happen to be the very next evening. Nothing daunted, however, Mrs. Taffy, espying you from the doorstep, entreats you to enter. Has not little John Davy been asking for you all day? You are forthwith compelled to take the cosy corner by the fire—a daily necessity at any season in humid Wales—and to make yourself thoroughly at home. Then in an over-generous, or, rather, particularly far-sighted moment, Mrs. Taffy will invite you to take tea, and you go away, if you are of an unsuspicious nature, giving her

His Deceit

credit for a wondrous hospitality—though, if the truth were told, it would be found that she had formed a deep-laid plot against her neighbour. Mrs. Taffy is shrewd enough to see that if she, instead of her neighbour, can secure your next year's custom, or your recommendation, it is worth a cup of tea and a hollow show of friendship. But be sure of this: you or some one else will be expected to pay with interest by-and-by for every halfpenny Mrs. Taffy has expended upon you.

The average Welsh landlady is never at a loss for some deceitful ruse by which she can entrap the unwary to her advantage. You may, to give one example, call at a house where "apartments" are to be obtained, and inquire the terms for food and lodging. Oh! indeed, she has not been used to letting; and while she is telling you her family history your general appearance and probable worth are being estimated by her Jewish eye. What would you think she ought to charge? she inquires. Then follows a whine about the "slackness" of the season, and some more information of an irrelevant nature is vouchsafed. Finally you say that you will leave it to her. But when the bill comes in you have much reason for repentance, for, instead of the moderation you anticipated, the highest conceivable rate has been put down for your rooms, and the most exorbitant tariff charged for

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the meals. Although these good ladies make a pretence of not knowing what to charge it is remarkable that they never err on the losing side !

When you pass a Welshman in the dark he invariably greets you with " Good-night " in his native tongue. But, kind-hearted reader, do not be led for a moment to suppose that the expression means what it usually signifies. The " greeting " is uttered, in the first place, merely to get to know by your response whether you are Welsh or English, and, if possible, to gather by the tone of your voice whether you are a stranger in the land or a resident. It is merely a password of the night, and has no other significance whatsoever. If the Welshman really wished you a " Good-night " in the usually accepted spirit he would prove his sincerity by also greeting you with a " Good-morning." But such courtesy is not to be expected from Taffy. He will have his back towards you in the light of day though he sees you all the while, but if you come upon him suddenly and catch his eye you will notice in it an expression of mingled discomfiture and hatred, the kind of look you may have observed in the eyes of a hunted cat.

By way of exemplifying the deceitful nature of the Welsh native, his flippant disregard for the truth, and absurd vanity, I could not do better

His Deceit

than quote Borrow's passage of arms with the Welshwoman near Llangollen. Borrow had entered a small inn, accompanied by one John Jones, who was acting as guide, and asked in Welsh for some bread, cheese, and beer. The woman, pretending to misunderstand him, exclaimed :

“ ‘ Sar ? ’

“ ‘ Bring us some bread, cheese, and ale,’ I repeated in Welsh.

“ ‘ I do not understand you, sar,’ said she, in English.

“ ‘ Are you Welsh ? ’ said I, in English.

“ ‘ Yes, I am Welsh.’

“ ‘ And can you speak Welsh ? ’

“ ‘ Oh yes, and the best.’

“ ‘ Then why did you not bring what I asked for ? ’

“ ‘ Because I did not understand you.’

“ ‘ Tell her,’ said I to John Jones, ‘ to bring us some bread, cheese, and ale.’

“ ‘ Come, aunt,’ said John, ‘ bring us bread and cheese and a quart of the best ale.’

“ The woman looked as if she was going to reply in the tongue in which he addressed her, then faltered, and at last said in English that she did not understand.

“ ‘ Now,’ said I, ‘ you are fairly caught ; this man is a Welshman, and, moreover, understands no language but Welsh.’

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“ ‘Then how can he understand you?’ said she.

“ ‘Because I speak Welsh,’ said I.

“ ‘Then you are a Welshman?’ said she.

“ ‘No, I am not,’ said I; ‘I am English.’

“ ‘So I thought,’ said she, ‘and on that account I could not understand you.’

“ ‘You mean that you would not,’ said I. ‘Now do you choose to bring what you are bidden?’

“ ‘Come, aunt,’ said John, ‘don’t be silly and cenfigenus, but bring the breakfast.’

“The woman stood still for a moment or two, and then, biting her lips, went away.

“ ‘What made the woman behave in this manner?’ said I to my companion.

“ ‘Oh, she was cenfigenus, sir,’ he replied. ‘She did not like that an English gentleman should understand Welsh; she was envious. You will find a dozen or two like her in Wales; but let us hope not more.’

“Presently the woman returned with the bread, cheese, and ale, which she placed on the table.

“ ‘Oh,’ said I, ‘you have brought what was bidden, though it was never mentioned to you in English, which shows that your pretending not to understand was all a sham. What made you behave so?’

His Deceit

“ ‘Why, I thought,’ said the woman, ‘that no Englishman could speak Welsh, that his tongue was too short.’

“ ‘Your having thought so,’ said I, ‘should not have made you tell a falsehood, saying that you did not understand when you knew that you understood very well. See what a disgraceful figure you cut.’

“ ‘I cut no disgraced figure,’ said the woman. ‘After all, what right have the English to come here speaking Welsh, which belongs to the Welsh alone, who, in fact, are the only people that understand it?’ ”

“John Jones’s” estimation as to the number of such people in Wales may have been true of his time, but, however that may be, nine-tenths of the natives of the Principality to-day are even more shifty and “cenfigenus” than the specimen which annoyed old George Borrow when he stumped into the Turf Tavern fifty years ago.

Few people can tell a lie to your face with such perfect composure as a Welshman. If he is bereft of the culture of the fine arts he has made up for the deficiency by becoming an accomplished liar. To be truthful is apparently beyond his ability, and falsehoods slide off his tongue with such an easy grace and such staggering prolificacy that one may well wonder—as every visitor to Wales has wondered—whether Taffy really knows the difference

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between veracity and barefaced lying at all. And not content with one class of falsehood, he adopts two, and uses them both with equal effect. The first is the ordinary common fib. A Welshman will swear to anything, deny anything, so long as it suits his purpose for the moment, without ever questioning right or wrong. Conscience he has none, or if he has it is not often made use of, and he will concoct the most malicious tales about this or that neighbour (especially if he be English) against whom he has some paltry spite, with a seriousness which convinces all who do not know him. He will relate to you, with his customary indifference towards the truth, incidents which never had a shadow of an existence outside his own remarkable imagination, and put into the mouths of others statements which they never uttered. Perjury seems to be no sin with the Welshman, and it makes not the slightest difference to his "Nonconformist conscience" whether he slanders his neighbour with his hand on the witness-box Bible or with the incoherent vocabulary of a drunken brawl.

But the basest form of the Welshman's lying is often done, not by words, but by his cunning habit of creating an impression that is a wholly false one. For example, you may live next door to Taffy for a considerable period and take him to be a good neighbour and willing friend. He has

His Deceit

always, when he gets used to you, a ready smile and a peculiarly light-hearted good nature, which gradually wins your confidence and esteem. But you do not have him very long at such close quarters before some little incident discloses the fact that you have all along been in a fool's paradise. You find that Taffy's smile is not given you for nothing ; that every confidence you have placed in him has been violated ; that all the little personal intimacies which, as you thought, existed only between him and you, as friend to friend and man to man, have been made the sport of the village corner. With a subtlety, snake-like and devilish, he has pried into your political ideas, and no ordinary affair of your domestic life has been too trifling for the filling of his capacious stomach for curiosity. Hidden under the cloak of friendship, cleverly assumed, he will satisfy this contemptible inquisitiveness of his as to your views upon questions which are to him of no apparent consequence, but which, nevertheless, are made the subjects for the entertainment of those devout Cymry who congregate in the little Bethels of every country-side, to preach Sunday politics and the damnation of the Saxon from behind the shelter of their big Bibles. This calumniatory spirit, this humbugging make-belief, of which more anon, is a feature so strongly marked in his character that you may know a Welshman by it all the world over. And yet, with an audacity

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that is as staggering as it is laughable, he has chosen for his national motto : “ Y Gwir yn Erbyn y Byd ”—which is, being interpreted, **THE TRUTH BEFORE THE WORLD !**

CHAPTER II

“THE SCREW”

THE close connection between the lying hypocrisy noted in the previous chapter naturally brings me to the religion of the Perfidious Welshman, or that which passes for his religion.

Wales is the most priest-ridden country in the world. She has never produced a single great preacher, nor a shadow of an individual who might, by a stretch of the imagination, be called “a divine.” Yet the Nonconformist minister—an ill-conditioned, illiterate, and ill-mannered tag of humanity, with a smug, self-satisfied expression—is a veritable genius for keeping his flock within the grip of his extortionate power. There might have been a time, perhaps, when sincerity and humility played their part in proselytising the heathen, when the Bible was read and expounded in “meekness of heart”; but now there are none of these things. They do not pay.

Those hideous erections called chapels—particularly those of the pepper-pot style favoured by the Calvinistic Methodists—are nothing more than the social clubs of the country-side, whither the black-coated faithful resort, not to pray forgiveness

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for their real or imaginary sins, but to air their politics, and pass resolutions for the damnation of the English Church and the English nation. These chapels are the political training-arenas—the very polling-booths—of the country; and it is within their walls that the Welshman, cowed into submission by threats of expulsion—which are even worse to him than promises of hell—is told how to vote. It is within their walls that the seeds of sedition are sown and the hope of education crushed. It is from the lips of the Socialistic-Radical preacher, or deacon, who, wrestling with the pretended Evil One, shrieks his artificial platitudes so as to impress his hearers, that fall the most stupendous falsehoods that man has ever breathed. He knows he is a little cleverer than they are, and when his ever-watchful eye observes the psychological change come over the gaping audience, when he feels that their minds, unbalanced by his rampant vapourings, are tottering on the verge of hysteria, and ready to receive the impression of his final words, he is satisfied, for his work is done. When in that condition he knows that his hearers will give him anything, promise him anything, do anything, and to him only will they be faithful. Hysteria is the weapon he uses with such telling effect. It is the weapon with which the minister kills his prey for meat, and it hangs by a thread, like the sword of Damocles, over the head of every native, young or

“ The Screw ”

old, of Nonconformist Wales. And while this sword of hysteria hangs over them, this crafty tub-thumper, this rabbit-brained parasite, like a snake, pours upon his helpless victims the slime of his unctuous tongue, and calls them *his*. Heaven help them !

With the noble precept set them by the English and other foreigners the Welsh might possibly have raised themselves in the social and moral plane. Education may have left a favourable stamp upon their manners and culture ; but so long as the people are held down under the yoke of this “ religion,” which paralyses any initiative they may have of their own, so long as they allow themselves to be led like sheep to the slaughter, or driven before the lash of a cunning, self-interested hierarchy with a “ Nonconformist conscience,” which means no conscience at all, every vestige of hope for the progress of Welsh Wales may be abandoned.

Such power do these pastors and deacons possess that the average Welshman dare not call his mind his own. In the event of any political crisis touching Welsh interest, we find that it is to the chapel that he goes for guidance. There he will absorb any humbug that the gentlemen in command may think fit to expound, and there he will be drilled into believing all the scurrilous political gossip which the holy men of God pour forth. It is literally astounding that even an ignorant Welshman should be so hoodwinked by the powers that be

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as thus to lose every shred of independence he may ever have possessed. Go to the chapels, the political preaching factories of the country, he must. He cannot help himself, neither dare he open his mouth to vent an opinion on the question of the hour. "Threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise" are as nothing compared to a fall-out with the local minister (who is, of course, the political hack of his district) and "the screw," whose worst pinch is excommunication and public execration.

Apart from the relentless persecution, the "envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness" which emanate from the Ebenezers and Bethels of Wales, one cannot but notice the appalling absence of reverence which prevails. Before the "meetings" begin the faithful deacons may often be seen plodding about the passages with their hats on, or standing in groups discussing the latest village slander. And during the hour or so devoted to what the Welshman considers preaching, the air reeks with the odour of "extra strong" and "bull's-eyes," which the women and children are audibly sucking, while the men spit copiously upon the floor at every ejaculation with which they point the minister's, or deacon's, sing-song utterances.

Yet these places, these hotbeds, in which are hatched every form of social pestilence, these dens of irreverence and hypocrisy are the Houses of God, these are the Gates of Heaven!

“ The Screw ”

The fact that the numerous Nonconformist sects in Wales are united in one body when the subject of disestablishment (or disendowment, which they would like much better) is in the air, does not prevent civil wars arising among themselves. As a matter of fact, the most spiteful and malicious insinuations are made by the members of one chapel against those of another, almost weekly, in every obscure village. There are also frequent “fallings-out” in the diaconal camp of the same sect, which often lead to the breaking-up of the congregation and the erection of a new “place of worship.” This latter very naturally assumes the form of an opposition show, which, if it is strong enough, often sends the original chapel to bankruptcy, and explains the following advertisement, which is an average sample of many of its kind, which readers may often have seen in the local papers of the Principality :

FOR SALE.

That commodious and well-built edifice named “Tabernacle” (duly certified for Religious Worship, etc.), situated at —, in the parish of —, in the county of —, will be offered for sale by public auction, absolutely without reserve, on —, —. Make good warehouse, motor garage, or livery stables. Sale, 12 o’clock prompt at — Hotel, —. Particulars,

JONES AND JONES,
Auctioneers.

By order of the mortgagee.

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If Charles of Bala (*requiescat in pace*), or “that man sent from heaven whose name was John,” as a great preacher once referred to the founder of Wesleyanism, were to come to earth now he would, without a doubt, or further ado, sever himself from the denomination which in these days so ruthlessly ignores all the earlier tenets of its originator. Nothing could violate the dying wishes of Charles and Wesley so effectually as the manner in which the modern Galvanised Methodist and “Wiselion” conduct their respective businesses. I once heard a preacher of notoriety (he was *not* Mr. Lloyd George, nor Sir Herbert Roberts, both preachers in their respective Bethels—more power to them) making terms with a company of deacons for the deliverance of a sermon. The bargaining took the best part of half an hour, but the minister’s oft-repeated statement is worth recording.

“I will preach you a sermon,” he said, “for ten sillings that will be indeed a ferry good sermon, and I will preach you one for fifteen sillings that will indeed bring tears to the eyes of the wimmins and children, but for twenty sillings I will make you a sermon (this with vehemence), that will knock the d——d dust out of the cushions; yes, indeed!” Needless to say, the bargain was struck at once, the carpet-beating oration having it.

Coming, as he does, of the people, the Welsh dissenting minister would not be expected to dis-

④ ④ ④ ④ “The Screw”

play any great intellectual ability. In fact, as I have shown, the only strong point he possesses is his power of applying “the screw” to his persecuted followers, who, with a dog-like fidelity, follow him whithersoever he goeth. “*My God shall be thy God,*” he tells them with arrogant despotism; and they forthwith lick his feet by way of Amen. Who that God is, is only too obvious, and one has but to hear the Bible read and discussed at a week-day chapel meeting to be utterly amazed by the down-right frivolous irreverence which often prevails. In every respect it is the presiding minister who comes first (for is he not the paid political agent for the Socialistic-Radical party of his parish?); the Bible follows second, and the most prominent deacon disputes the third position with the Almighty. These things are not fictitious, but sober, earnest truth.

To be a “gentleman-parson” is only possible within the Established Church, though some of the bolder spirits among the dissenters have been known to adopt the prefix Rev. (which once they so abhorred), and to ape the collar and cloth of the Anglican persuasion! These outward and visible signs of an inward craving after the front seats of religious respectability one may frequently notice on the roadsides of Wales. But the dissenting ministers, the screw-drivers, of this highly religious country are intellectually the most narrow-

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minded, hide-bound set of individuals on earth. They still nurse that love of persecution, cruelty, and despotism which characterised the old Druids ; their thirst for gossip and slander is insatiable, and so long as they can remain the political wire-pullers of their abandoned race, and extort enough money from their ignorant and down-trodden prey, they are content to continue their perfidious trade, to enjoy the vainglory and hypocrisy of their contemptible lives, and to juggle with the souls of their deluded fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER III

PART I

THE SABBATH

THERE is, of course, that other type of Welsh “divine” who need not detain us long, seeing that he gains the same end in the long run as his spiritual brother already referred to, only he goes about it by different methods. His way is to pass through life to the tune of a perpetual snivel, to whine lugubrious apologies for the sins of that tiny corner of earth which he calls “the world,” and to leave the application of “the screw” to the deacons. The latter are just the antithesis of what he is. They never miss an opportunity of insinuating very unmistakably that he is a paid servant of their chapel, and that he—an inferior—is there on sufferance only. His means to make others weep, and so win their attention, are to weep himself, and this he manages very efficiently. He gets round his hearers by playing the worm, and, as oratory is not a strong point with him, he chants the mournful Psalms of David with slow and doleful voice. He is a despicable groveller,

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a tame cat in the hands of his employers, but none the less a very serpent in the grass as a politician. As a past-master in the "craft and subtlety of the devil" he excels. You may know him by the hunted look he wears on Sundays, by the apologetic air of his sartorial get-up, and by his walk, which latter is a living exemplification of Agag's when he anticipated the pieces of his dear body being enjoyed by the stray dogs of Gilgal.

Quite one of the funniest sights upon a Welsh Sunday is that of a row of octogenarian women in a chapel pew undergoing the trials and delights of adult Sunday-school. Some are visibly overflowing with a superabundance of fatty tissue, others are thin and look cantankerous. All are in black. The incense of hair-oil is blent with the onions of their Sunday dinner. The "extra strong" and the "bull's-eyes" vainly endeavour to assuage the joyful miseries of over-indulgence, and to add an additional flavour to the characteristic perfume of the old ladies' perspiring bodies. (This, I always think, with Shakespeare, is a "wasteful and ridiculous excess." For who would wish to "paint the lily" or "throw a perfume on the violet"?) But the quaintest part of the proceedings is to see each one of these members of the adult Sunday-school stand up, and, parrot-like, repeat verses of the Scriptures previously set her

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to learn. And it would convulse even John Shand with laughter to hear the “debate”—a form of recreation now much in vogue in the chapels—which follows on the knotty points which any of the said verses may contain. The unravelling of the problems suggested by the following questions, for example, often creates the greatest dissension, and sometimes causes lifelong enmity between the competitors.

(1) Who was the father of Zebedee’s children ?

(2) Was it possible for Solomon to have had more than one father, seeing that when he died it is said that he “slept with his fathers” ?

(3) Could the kind of warming-pan provided for David (see 1 Kings, chap. i.) when he was so well-stricken with years that he “gat no heat” be, with due respect to Welsh morality, provided for the aged in these days ?

When “Young Wales” swaggers abroad in Sunday clothes his strong points are a Woodbine and a fringe. Bell-bottom trousers and tan boots sometimes add to the general effect, but the fringe is, without a doubt, the weapon with which “Young Wales” feminine is baited and captured. The modest “cow-lick” of our juvenile days is utterly vanquished and put to shame by the magnificent examples of tonsorial art which adorn the foreheads of the young bloods of Sunday Wales to-day.

It would be wearisome to describe at length the various fashions now “worn” in the masculine

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fringe, the various curling and frizzing methods in vogue, and the different psychological effects which they have upon amorously inclined damsels ; but as it is the duty of the faithful historian to leave no important feature unrecorded, the Cymric fringe must be at least briefly mentioned. The most pronounced “mode,” perhaps, is the “inverted cow-lick.” That is to say, while the whole of the head, save the front of the scalp, is shorn with the characteristic thoroughness of the gaol barber, the remaining tuft, after being well mulched with an oleaginous preparation, is plastered in a downward sweep over the forehead until it reaches the eyebrows, where it is deftly finished off with what may be best described as a scroll. A cap, placed well back on the head, and a Woodbine, complete the toilet.

Another fashionable type of fringe is the “Friseur,” which in preparation passes through the same stages as the preceding, but instead of the final anointing with oil it is frizzed into a veritable bush, which stands well out from one side of the forehead. The “Friseur” is seen in various sizes. It is shaggy or daintily crimped, elaborately curled, waved, or brushed heavenward with a jaunty air. He is an exceptionally fine fellow who sports this particular “mode,” and “the screw” maintains a careful watch upon him.

Then there is what may best be called the “Cymric Toupee,” which extends from ear to ear—and these

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latter appendages are worn low in the Welshman—a carefully trained bordering of fuzziness just beneath the cap, accompanied by a Woodbine.

These types, of course, are allowed considerable latitude, and various intermediate forms are seen. All fringes, I may note, are carefully tucked underneath the front rim of that emblem of faith and respectability, the bowler hat, when it has to be substituted for the somewhat irreligious cap.

The Welsh Sabbath is a very different affair, as might be supposed, from the Sunday of more enlightened countries. It was obviously never made for man. We have heard of Scottish Sabatarianism, but it is quite “continental” compared with the puritanical Sunday of perfidious Wales, when all the land is dressed in black, and hordes of the faithful go to and fro like mourners about the streets. They wear unhappy faces, and little wonder. For although “the screw” is ever present, grinding them down, loading them with “heavy burdens, grievous to be borne,” tyrannising over young and old alike, it is never applied with such vigour as upon the Lord’s Day. It is then that the rapacious ministers, deacons, and the rest of the pernicious crew, have the best grip over their flock. It is then that they oil afresh the wheels of their unprincipled dogma, and brace up the bolts of political intrigue. It is true that the Bible comes in for some consideration, often of an entirely frivolous

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nature, as we have seen, but its main value appears to be as a sop and a make-believe. It is the cloak under which lurk the elements of conspiracy and vice. Little wonder that the pages of the New Testament are rarely opened in the Welsh chapels—especially in those of the Calvinistic Methodists—for the teaching of Christ would put the purest of Welsh Nonconformist consciences to shame. And, furthermore, the ministers and their satellites are cunning enough to realise that the lessons contained in the four Gospels, and the Epistles of St. Paul and St. James, might remove the scales from their blinded congregations' eyes, and permit them to see what "pure religion and undefiled" really is. Therefore the New Testament is very wisely, from the Methodist's point of view, kept, more or less, a closed book.

On the whole, though they greedily absorb every moment of it, the faithful have rather a full day on Sundays, more especially if belonging to the Methodist persuasion. For instance, a beginning is made with a singing-lesson, or that which passes for such, at an hour when most sensible people are in bed. Then comes the usual morning "service" (mainly political), followed by more singing and dinner. Shortly afterwards there is a Sunday-school for adults and infants, the "debates" already referred to, political addresses, and more singing. After a hasty tea the singing-meeting is again set agoing.



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Then comes the usual evening “service,” after which there is a debate, a strong dose of political tyranny, and another singing-meeting, which continues to a late hour; and on *Monday* evening they renew their strength again!

But the devout Cymry, between the hours of “worship,” finds time to read one of the Saturday epitomes of the week’s news and one or other of the Welsh papers. In the former they are entertained by the spiciest clippings from the divorce and police courts, while the latter provides them with a collection of defamatory articles which no other press in the world would deign to touch with a pair of tongs.

Another favourite pastime, which usually occupies some rare moments between tea and the singing-meeting which follows is the evidently serious business of combing the children’s heads. Curiosity has often led me to investigate the cause of those agonising yells and half-stifled moans which so often trouble the Sunday evening air of Welsh villages, and on each occasion I have found that, instead of some act of cruelty—as generally understood—being perpetrated, a careful mother was merely combing the matted scalps of little Ann Mary or David John. Under different circumstances, and with other people, this would not have been the painful operation which the sounds proved it to be, but here the teeth of the comb are very fine, Mrs.

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Taffy's hands are very strong, and the objects of the chase evidently belong to a prolific species of remarkable agility. This maternal attention is a most commendable one, of course, but I often wonder why this particular hour of the Welsh Sunday should have been dedicated to it.

While this business is in progress father Jones may generally be seen lounging over his pig-stye door, watching, with evident satisfaction, the "gentleman who pays the rent" gobble up his evening meal, which one of the female members of the household has just provided. This is a kind of Sunday recreation very dear to Jones, and he indulges in it whenever opportunity occurs. If he has not got a pig himself he goes to see a neighbour who has, for nothing else seems to satisfy him so completely during these leisure moments, between the hours of those "spiritual indulgences" referred to above, as the companionship of swine. After breakfast, after dinner, and after tea he chews a complacent cud of satisfaction in that salubrious air; and here, again, I ask, why? If "mild home-cured" had any attractions for Taffy perhaps one might understand this Sunday observance as indicating dreams of anticipated pleasure; but it has not. The "Best American" is the bacon he relishes; but the reader who is anxious to learn how this product of Chicago is served and eaten by Jones must be referred to another chapter.



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It is probable that the casual visitor to Wales sees little of these things, but if it is his misfortune to have to spend a Sunday in the Principality, say in one of the seaside towns, he must be brought face to face with the hypocrisy and humbug that prevail. Up to a year or two ago (and it is not much better now) there was not a train to take him anywhere. He was not allowed to indulge in a comfortable chair on the promenade, such being considered a wicked luxury ; and to stand up, or walk about, unless he had first done due homage to the priests, was idle and dissolute. Even suggestions as to holding sacred concerts have been opposed by the combined forces of Galvanised Methodism and the other self-interested sects in some of these seaside towns. The poor visitor, therefore, could do nothing, because there was nothing for him to do. He was hemmed in, whether he liked it or not, by the strong walls of puritanical persecution. Of course everybody knows why this was done, and is still done. The ministers must keep their chapels going or starve, and they know full well if that bogie, the continental Sunday, were to set foot in their midst, they would soon be without their bread-and-butter. So they fight what they consider to be the " thin end of the wedge," hoping that by so doing they may keep the thick end from crushing them. The whole affair has its origin in selfishness, for these birds of prey have quite enough

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to do in lining their own nests, without bothering about the preservation of other people's souls. I have not the slightest doubt that if the money paid for Sunday chairs on the beach went into the coffers of the ministry we should not hear very much opposition on the subject! Are not pew-rents still an important part of the Welsh Nonconformist's creed?

The people who pay their shilling to go and hear one of Beethoven's symphonies conducted by a master-hand on a Sunday are, we are expected to believe, beyond redemption. But if that same shilling were paid for an hour's endurance of a less elevating kind within the chapel walls they would be immediately counted among the "saved"! Bigotry, self-interest, and idolatry were never carried to a more intolerable extreme than in Welsh seaside resorts upon a Sunday, and until those who struggle so desperately to thrust the evangelical teaching of the Mosaic law down the throats of the visitors who wish to make Sunday a real day of rest are guided by a sounder reason, the holiday towns of Wales will continue to occupy their present third-rate positions among others of Britain.

But it is not only the seaside towns which thus bear the yoke of persecution. The same thing goes on all over the country. And in concluding this part of the subject one cannot help being reminded of the way in which the author of "The Bible in Spain" overcame the arguments of the

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Welshwoman at Glandyfrdwy upon the subject of chapel-going. He met her as she was returning from chapel, and, with his usual desire to learn all he could about those with whom he came in contact, inquired to what sect she belonged, and whether she had been to worship. She was a Calvinistic Methodist, and was then returning from chapel, was the reply, to which she added :

“ Have *you* been to chapel, sir ? ”

“ I do not go to chapel ; I belong to the Church.”

“ Have you been to church, sir ? ”

“ I have not—I said my prayers at home, and then walked out.”

“ It is not right to walk out on the Sabbath day, except to go to church or chapel.”

“ Who told you so ? ”

“ The law of God, which says you shall keep holy the Sabbath day.”

“ I am not keeping it unholy.”

“ You are walking about ; and in Wales, when we see a person walking idly about on the Sabbath day, we are in the habit of saying, ‘ Sabbath-breaker, where are you going ? ’ ”

“ The Son of Man walked through the fields on the Sabbath day : why should I not walk along the roads ? ”

“ He who called Himself the Son of Man was God, and could do what He pleased, but you are not God.”

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This reply might have finally settled the matter with most people, but our resourceful old friend was prepared for any emergency in argument, and replied :

“ But He came in the shape of a man to set an example. Had there been anything wrong in walking about on the Sabbath day He would not have done it.”

Although Borrow had a strong word of appreciation for the Welsh, as a whole, he did not fail to note their extreme narrow-mindedness, their hatred of the stranger, their secretiveness, and the deadening effect of the straight-jacket of Calvinistic Methodism. And when he passed along the road near Holyhead, and, seeing a field of oats on one side and a Methodist chapel on the other, exclaimed : “ Oats and Methodism ! what better symbols of poverty and meanness ? ” he struck a note of truth which still rings in the ears of every impartial visitor.

PART II

DISESTABLISHMENT AND THE PEASANT PRIESTHOOD

THE most absorbing topic of the dissenting Welshman's every-day life is, of course, the disendowment of the Anglican Church. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine what would become



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of Taffy should that question ever be finally disposed of. It is his anchor, refuge, and abiding hope, compared with which even the chances of his final redemption on the Day of Judgment are of trivial importance. It is the stimulant with which the cunning Member of Parliament rouses the flagging loyalty of his constituency; it is the "catch vote" of the aspiring parliamentarian of tender years, and a certain bait in the hands of that political-religious octopus who calls himself "a divine." But the peculiar part about the whole affair is the appalling ignorance which still prevails upon this subject. Of course one does not expect any display of intelligence, as generally understood, from a Taffy, but one would imagine that, after all these years, during which the Disendowment of the Church in Wales has been the one point upon which every Welshman's ambitions have been focussed, at least a fair knowledge of the subject might have been gleaned. But instead of that we find the same old bottomless arguments, the same falsehoods used with the same tiresome persistency. It is just possible that the Welsh M.P.'s and some of their lieutenants, the country pastors and deacons, know more of the matter than they pretend to know; but the truth is unpalatable to these people, its light would quench the well-fed flames of that ignorance which is so useful, and the whole party cry—for it is nothing more—

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would fall to the ground like a house of cards. Nine-tenths of the ordinary Taffies one meets firmly believe that if the Church were disendowed to-morrow (they do not care twopence whether she is disestablished, for it is her money they want) an enormous bag of gold would be divided among them ! It would be quite superfluous, therefore, to discuss the subject further, but I feel constrained to give our friend the Anglican parson in Wales a passing notice, for he is not altogether an uninteresting specimen of his species.

His origin, humble and homely, is explained thus. If the eldest son of one of the more well-to-do Welsh farmers is to enter the ministry it is the Anglican Church, rather than the chapel of his forebears, that he chooses. The former carries more respect with it than the latter, and besides, if the hard-earned savings are to be spent on Jones Junior's education and polish at Oxford or Lampeter, it were a pity to cast such a finished pearl before the Nonconformist herd. And this, of course, accounts for much of the inefficiency so characteristic of the Church in Wales to-day. The average curate is, in the first place, of the wrong mould, and he can no more change his skin than the leopard his spots. He may go to Jesus College on account of the scholarships offered to those of his race, or merely because it is the "Welsh College," but, as he and his native friends there all



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herd together and speak their own tongue, none of the advantages of University life are gained. Very often these embryo parsons do not even afford themselves such an opportunity as Oxford, but go direct from a Grammar School (working on the parental farm meanwhile) to Lampeter, which turns them out a finished article in about two years ! So usual is it for the curate to be thus speedily evolved that the saying "from plough to pulpit in two years" is a well-known one in the Principality. Can we wonder, therefore, that a curate of this peasant priesthood, cast by ambitious parents into a sphere of life for which nature never intended him, is so often an object of ridicule ? Poor Jones may try very hard to act "the gentleman," but he is always "making a mess of it," either by being servile to a repelling degree to those above him in social status, or—much more frequently—by making his cloth and "position" an excuse for a riotous and ridiculous indulgence in his intolerable presumption and native conceit. If his duty lies where English services are held, his accent, both in pulpit and drawing-room, is ever a subject of amusement. It is hard, for example, to keep one's countenance when you hear "wax" pronounced to rhyme with "rocks," a leper called a leaper, a malefactor a mailfactor, and a ewe lamb an e-wee lamb !

One cannot, perhaps, expect a curate, who goes

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into the Church with the sole object of becoming "a gentleman," to be a particularly spiritual object, but the first thing he does, as a rule, is to buy a gold ring, and the next to look around for a rich wife. And, however great his failings may be in other respects, he is remarkably clever in the way he manages to attain this second object. Beyond those heights the average Welsh curate does not seem to aspire very keenly, which partly explains the fact that there are so few men of eminence in the Church of the Principality. The Celtic temperament is not capable of sustained effort. When a Taffy has become safely ensconced in a fair position—above that to which he has been accustomed—he ceases to trouble himself further.

But, in all fairness, it must be admitted that there are many men of birth and culture in the Welsh Church, and that the latter is now a living influence for good in many respects. There is a distinct improvement noticeable in the education of the clergy; and the bishops, in whose gift are most of the livings, appear to be exercising more discretion than they used to exercise in appointing men to posts for which they are really adapted. If, as in some instances, the parish priest is still a mere cipher, there is satisfaction in knowing that he is at least harmless. But no one who has lived in Wales can have failed to observe that whenever the dissenter is in trouble it is to the

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parson he appeals for succour. There is always that difference between the latter and the chapel minister. The parson is “a gentleman”—that much is readily granted. He can and will help in times of need, while, as for the other, he is merely “one of us”—an impotent member of the community who is respected, or feared, only because he carries a sting in his tail.

CHAPTER IV

HEROES AND HISTORY

EVERY impartial student of history who has turned his attention to the Welsh has been brought face to face with the fact that the records of the Principality are singularly devoid of interest. He has a difficulty in discovering a single Welsh name worthy to be inscribed upon the scroll of fame. While every other land has had its prophets who are known the world over ; while every other land has had its beautiful and noble women, its epic poets, its statesmen, its scientists, its explorers, and its martyrs, Wales still stands destitute and alone—the only country which cannot say to the stranger : Behold the Valhalla of our mighty Dead ! Some few individuals there may be, perhaps, who have earned for themselves a parochial fame by writing elementary verses of the sort we should expect from a fourth-form schoolboy in the agonies of his calf-love. Others have earned a bubble reputation for stump oratory at the Eisteddfodau, and there are those who have done deeds great in their own eyes, but of which no nation or

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people need be proud. But rather than generalise thus, let me, to be quite just, refer to some of the more prominent names in the "Who's Who" of Wales's Welsh notoriety, so that the reader may measure for himself the claims made for those departed Cymry by their anxious successors.

The greatest of Welsh "prophets" and bards was Taliesyn, who, as an infant, was said to have been washed up by the waves of Cardigan Bay tied up in a bundle, his mother, no doubt, having her own good reasons for trying to dispose of the child. This fabulous prodigy is supposed to have begun making verses before he was well out of the said bundle, and to have become so famed as a bard that he was ultimately one of the great ones who presided at the mythical court of Arthur. But there is not a single item of his life-story which is not based on mere conjecture. We are expected to believe that he was born fatherless, with an amphibious resemblance to Moses; that he wrote the indifferent lines ascribed to him (which is extremely doubtful); that he was both a Christian and a Druid at the same time, and that he was buried in two places, viz. near Borth and on the shore of Llyn Gerionydd (which is still more doubtful). (The double-barrelled arrangement, however, works out very well for the postcard-seller and hotel-proprietor, who prey upon the unsuspecting visitor.) This, in brief, is the substance of Taliesyn's

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life and fame. Most authorities who have taken the trouble to inquire into the matter at all are generally agreed that there never was such an individual, and that the whole affair is purely mythical. So much for the “greatest of British bards”!

Twm O'r Nant, to take a rather more modern example of the bardic breed, really did live, and he seems to have had a little more originality than the rest of his kind. But an exhaustive search through his “poems,” which, it is said, were written with the juice of elder-berries instead of ink, as though they acquired from the alleged fact a factitious importance, does not reveal a single line or stanza worthy of being offered to intelligent readers. It were kinder to leave the jingling alliteration and cheap trickery of his painfully rudimentary work to the archives of his own countrymen's memory—for Twm had something of the man in him, which is more than can be said of any of his successors in the bardic business.

Just lately there has been quite a little fuss of a parochial nature occasioned by the erection and unveiling of a monument to one Huw Morris, who was another of the many “greatest” of Welsh bards. But if we are to judge by the “englyn,” or epitaph, which he wrote, and which is supposed to be one of his crowning works, seeing that it is graven on his monument, and, for the nonce, quoted or

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sung at all bardic gatherings, and such occasions all over Wales, he would not be very inspiring as a "poetical genius" to people of culture. The "inspired englyn" has been translated thus :

" Now to my rest I hurry away,
To the world which lasts for ever and aye,
To Paradise, the beautiful place,
Trusting alone in the Lord of Grace."

That we are expected to consider as something very fine indeed, and if it does remind us of an elementary "In Memoriam" verse in the evening halfpenny press we must not say so—in Wales ! " Ah ! but you know the poems do not bear translation," we are told so often, and Taffy is ever ready with that useful excuse whenever he is asked to show the outside world what his heroes in literature really have done. But if it is to be granted that the "poems" lose much in being translated, might not the same be said of Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, or Schiller ? Do we, does any one, think any the less of these great names since their works have been read in almost every language of the world ? Not one whit ; but the Welshman is so inflated with his estimation of his own importance that he imagines we will take all he says to be beyond question, and bare our heads in reverence to these ephemeral "bards" of whom no one but himself has ever heard.

But where, may I ask, is this great literature,

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about which we are constantly hearing so much ? a literature which, so we are told, was extant before the date of the Norman Conquest, etc. I do not deny that there are old books in plenty in private collections, but if this literature is so unique, so transcendently great, so universally loved by the Welsh, why is it not more often seen in the hands of the people, and why has it had no influence for good upon them ? The visitor to Wales may go into a hundred cottages and find no books except a Bible, some commentaries, and perhaps a volume of sermons by a local preacher. If you inquire of the inhabitants whether they can show you a volume of Welsh verse they will reply in the negative. All they know of the “ bards ” and “ heroes ” is what they have been told—what they have heard. And the anxious stranger may visit the Welsh bookshops and all manner of places in the anticipation of discovering some of these wondrous works, but everywhere it is the same tale. “ They are not stocked.” “ There is no sale for them.” “ No, we cannot say where any one of them can be procured.” Does any reader suppose that the visitor to other countries would be met with such responses ? Would the whole of the Welsh bardic “ heroes ”—real or imaginary—rolled into one be equal to Robert Burns, with all his shortcomings ? “ Auld Lang Syne ” is known and loved by every household in the world, but “ Hen Wlad fy Nhahau ” would not

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be recognised anywhere outside Wales, except by Taffy. Wherefore I say, in all seriousness, that it is the utmost nonsense to talk as the leaders of Welsh Wales do to-day of their literary "heroes," and it simply indicates once more Taffy's insufferable and absurd conceit.

It would only be inflicting unnecessary pain upon the reader to go any further into this matter of celebrated bards. Those whom I have not mentioned are not worth a passing thought, and the only poems touching upon the older celebrities of the Land of Song were not, as might have been supposed, written by Welshmen, but by Sir Walter Scott, Mrs. Hemans, Cowper, and others. Even writers of genius and imagination such as these can make little of the "heroes" of Wales, and, judging by the results they have attained in other spheres, the poverty of the material with which they had to deal is only too obviously apparent.

Our researches among the warrior patriots of Wales will be rewarded with the names of those who did nothing more than earn for themselves a wholly unjustifiable reputation, and we shall look in vain through the records of the early wars for any trace of a hero who can fairly be said to have had his country at his back, and who died in any straightforward attempt to save his people from their supposed enemies. Rather do we find that the heroic Caradoc, for example, was surrendered into

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the hands of the invading Romans by his own relations ; that Boadicea—the British “ Joan of Arc ”—after leading 80,000 of her followers to massacre poisoned herself rather than face the consequences of her own indiscretion. Maelgwyn Gwynedd, once Prince of North Wales, was a dissolute reprobate and coward who, after creating considerable insurrection himself, fled to hide in Llanrhos church, where he died from fright because he thought he saw, through the keyhole of the door, a ghost coming up out of the sea to devour him !

Llewelyn was no more than a pestilent outlaw who, not satisfied with the goodly lands offered to him, lived to create trouble and dissatisfaction in a country that was at least peaceable. And the result of this was what every schoolboy knows. The English king's patience and indulgence very naturally gave out, and Llewelyn's own people lost faith in him, and treacherously handed him over to the English army. The story of David, his brother and successor, who was ultimately served in the same way, makes even less edifying reading. It may be that the story of the former prince's dog “ Gelert ” may help to keep alive, for a little while, a nursery memory of the man. But it is unfortunate that the whole tale is purely imaginary, and that the supposed incident has no more to do with Beddgelert than it has with Timbuctoo.

Perhaps the greatest of all warrior heroes, to the

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lopsided Cymric mind, is Owen Glyndwr. But why? The reader may well ask. Here is a man who, on account of some petty, personal quarrel, plunged his country, which had known a century of peace and progress, into one of the bloodiest wars in history, the net result of this arbitrary and anything but heroic chieftain's rashness being that he left, as a legacy to his successors, a country that was for a hundred years steeped in poverty and famine.

Need one probe further into the almost forgotten details of the lives of these discreditable "heroes"? Is it not enough to know that the pages of history are so deeply stained with the blood of their ill-famed deeds?

"Young Wales" of to-day has a passion for adopting, without permission, any celebrities of other countries whom he thinks will add a little lustre and tone to his own dull records. This is, perhaps, only natural if we consider his insatiable appetite for notoriety (easily gained), and the extraordinary poverty of Welsh history in people of reputation. And not content with that he will, with his accustomed indifference to veracity, claim the achievements of other nations' sons as the achievements of the sons of Wales—even without the flimsiest particle of support. We have been told that Adam was a Welshman, though I cannot see why our first parent should be a particular credit to Wales any more than he was to the Garden of

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Eden—at least not from the Welsh point of view ! And poor old Columbus should, according to Taffy, be shorn of his honour, for it is firmly believed by “ Young Wales ”—notwithstanding the utter absence of any proof—that it was a Welshman who discovered America ! The next news we shall be told will be that Charles of Bala made the first flying-machine, and that George of Criccieth built the Pyramids of Egypt to commemorate the introduction of Old-age Pensions.

The “ Two old maids of Llangollen,” whose names are known wherever the English tongue is spoken, would also be claimed by Taffy as products of his own land. But as a matter of fact every intelligent person knows that they were Irish ladies, and had nothing whatever to do with Wales beyond the fact that they lived for some years at Llangollen. And speaking of Llangollen, I am reminded that the late Sir Theodore Martin is already being claimed as “ One of Us,” though every one knows he was a thoroughbred Scot. The next move will be the conferring upon his memory of a bardic title, while the bards assembled will make verses upon his virtues. To hazard a guess, the former will be “ Theo,” while the less said about the verses the better.

Wales has had no great women of good repute. She has had some “ heroines,” if such they may be called ; but the most charitable course to adopt



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regarding them is one of silence, lest those of my readers whose plane of morality is higher than Taffy's should have cause to blush for very shame.

After endeavouring to persuade himself and an incredulous world that Gladstone was a Welshman, and that Lord Roberts was intended to have been, only his ancestors happened to have got upon the wrong side of St. George's Channel ; after asking us to believe that the aristocracy of Wales—or the great bulk of them—do not owe their nobility and their fame to Norman or other alien blood, which is common knowledge—"Young Wales" produces his trump card, which is Sir H. M. Stanley, with a leek in his hat. Here we must admit ourselves so far convinced, but while we do so it is as well to remind the Welsh enthusiast that the only connection with Wales which the great explorer ever had was St. Asaph workhouse and his mother ; that he owed all his energy and courage to America ; and that it was for a mess of Yankee pottage that he sold his Cymric name, and turned his back for ever upon the land of his nativity. Why ! even the adored Charles, already mentioned, the patron saint of Calvinistic Methodism, was indebted for all his learning to Oxford, and had it not been for his thirty odd years as a Church of England clergyman he would never have been heard of at all.

The only "Jones" of any note, out of the multi-

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tudes who have borne that proud name, is one Inigo, whose sole monument, known to Welshmen, is the old bridge at Llanrwst, which is said to possess, in the absence of any better qualification, the doubtful merit (seeing that Conway's flood runs beneath it) of shaking when you jump upon it in the middle ! No other Welsh architect or engineer has achieved anything more worthy than that old bridge, and we are not at all sure that Inigo built it after all. Indeed, if we were to stand on Snowdon's summit, and imagine we could see the uttermost parts of Wales, her fine roads threading the deep valleys and climbing the hills, her noble bridges and stalwart castles (of which latter no Welshman need boast, though he now very gladly takes the admission money from the Saxon sightseer !)—if we were to see all these things, and more, it would be to the Romans and the English, and to such names as Stevenson and Telford, that we should take off our hats. For it was these great nations and great men who came to overcome the difficulties of nature, difficulties with which the Welshman was impotent to deal. And if we were to look further, and consider the fine seaside towns, the great quarries of granite and of slate, the coalfields, railways, and, indeed, any commercial enterprise of repute of which Wales may be proud, we should undoubtedly find that English enterprise, English capital, and English brains are the very hub and backbone of them all.

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And yet who does not know the depth of the Welshman's sullen hatred of the Sassenach, without whom he and his country would be bankrupt in a week ? But "there are none so blind as they who will not see."

CHAPTER V

SOME MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

WHEN a Welshman, having left his own country early in life, gets on in "social position," which usually means being a successful milkman or draper, he turns up an offended nose at the savoury leek of his forefathers, and flaunts a jaunty daffodil in his coat. This, of course, is only an obvious indication of the very flimsy regard which the more go-ahead sons of Gwalia entertain towards their fatherland when once they are well away from it. I suppose there is an element of distinction in possessing a respectable patron saint, but Jones abroad, even with all his splendid assurance, cannot, with an easy conscience, adorn his chest with an English rose, which he would like to do if only he had another name. And the leek being impossible, he makes a feeble attempt to prove that the time-honoured vegetable never was the floral emblem at all, and that it was none other than the daffodil! He therefore adopts the latter flower on St. David's Day, and basely sacrifices the former for an evanescent flavour in his soup.

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I was once travelling from Wales to England on the evening of March 1, and there were three Welshmen in the same compartment of the railway carriage. All wore leeks (for which I have an eternal memory), but I was interested to notice that no sooner had the train rumbled over the Dee bridge at Chester than all three Taffies simultaneously fell upon their leeks and devoured them in silence with precipitate haste, immediately afterwards adorning each vacant buttonhole with a daffodil. They seemed much more composed after that, and spoke "high English" with an affected air! A trivial little incident, perhaps, but it serves to show the depth of Welsh patriotism—and a little more.

The visitor to the Principality is always struck with the extraordinary uncouthness of the behaviour of the native. He is more than uncouth, for he seems to possess no trace of that natural refinement which in most uncultured races to some extent supplies the place of polished manners, or atones for their absence. A Welshman, unless he has been severely drilled by English precept, seldom dreams of taking off his hat to a lady; nor does he salute his employer, or one who is his superior by birth and position, as though he likes doing so. Either may have been his benefactor, and may have lifted him and his family out of the gutter, and established them in comfortable circumstances from no other motive

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than kindness of heart. Yet few Welshmen will have the decency to recognise the one or the other with any more fitting salutation than that detestable sideward jerk of the head which every one who has ever been in Wales knows only too well. It is hard to find one little atom of "Nature's gentleman" about Jones. While the Irishman is frankly respectful where respect is due, the Welshman often begrudges the effort of recognising your presence at all—even in his own contemptuous way. It is in his blood to be boorish, and he rather prides himself upon the distinction.

Of course "one can only expect a grunt from a pig" after all, but centuries of contact with civilised people ought, one would imagine, to have left some little mark of refinement on Taffy's epidermis. But when we know that he is taught from the cradle to hate the English—and all who are not Welsh are English to Jones—that all his life the falsehood is being hammered into him that to be polite is to be servile, we cannot wonder that his grossness is so distinctive a feature. The children will open gates for you (for pennies), and sing to you (for pennies), and ask you to accept a bunch of flowers (for pennies), and offer to "roll" your bicycle up a hill (for pennies), and smile their prettiest smiles for you (for pennies), but you may read upon their faces the curses which are the heritage bequeathed to them *for you* by their psalm-singing

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parents. And so long as servility and respect are one in the Welshman's mind, so long will this condition of affairs endure. It is mainly the bigotry and the revolting ignorance of the dissenting parson which are responsible for the perpetuation of the hoggish manners common to the natives of Wales.

Speaking of Welsh children, one must admit that many of them are bonnie enough as children go. And they are quick to learn, have a natural ability for picking up knowledge, and a monkey-like aptitude or cunning for learning by mimicry. But there abruptly ends the catalogue of their merits. The boys, unless, as we have seen, they emigrate, almost immediately lose all the knowledge they ever possessed, and in any agricultural district to-day one may see scores of young men who have the utmost difficulty in writing their own names or reading their own language. To write the latter grammatically, or even tolerably well, is an impossibility with them. The average rustic, male or female, who has been through the board school in his youth, and whose mind has been blighted from its birth by the poisoning influence of the Cymric "Christian," would not be able to pass an examination of the most elementary character. He will tell you right off the names of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, but if you should ask him where Westminster Abbey is, "how many

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beans make four," whether the Battle of Waterloo was a cock-fight or a football match, he would be completely nonplussed. In this respect the girls are not much, if any, better. But the most remarkable fact about the damsels of Wales is that, although they often have more than the average amount of good looks, by the time they reach a "marriageable" age they are old women—toothless, anæmic, and with a distinct inclination to shrivel. It has often been a marvel to me how Taffy, the least courageous and most cautious of men, can bring himself to marry a Welsh girl, with such a dreadful prospect in view. But it is often a case of Hobson's choice !

When these Jenny Joneses become housewives their time appears to be more fully occupied than is usually the case with the helpmeets of man. But although they are always "contriving," always waddling about in a striped petticoat and Hinde's from morn to night, they never seem to get their work done. Hopelessly inefficient as managers of the smallest household, they muddle along, unconscious of time, washing up their own footmarks all day long. Gossiping in shawls, and chapel-going, of course, take up a considerable time, and being prolific mothers, often having two (sometimes three) at a birth, the brood requires some attention, though, from appearances, one might guess it receives none.

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But the prolificacy of the Welsh deserves more than a passing mention, for it is a characteristic of remarkable prominence and one, strange as it may seem, in which Taffy takes much pride. In substantiation of this fact, which may be doubted by refined English readers, I would refer the latter to the tablet placed in Conway church to the memory of Nicholas Hookes, who, the inscription records, was "the 41st son of his father, and himself the father of 27 children." And was not Llywarch Hên, "warrior and poet," the father of twenty-four sons, all of whom attained maturity? It is not necessary, however, to search the archives of the past so as to prove the truth of Taffy's fame as a begetter of children. Such litters as those mentioned above are by no means uncommon in Welsh villages to-day, and it is a well-known fact that nowhere else on earth is intermarrying practised to such an appalling extent. The enormous number of families bearing the names of Jones, Williams, Davies, or Evans, as well as the extraordinary prevalence of consumption, lunacy, and that milder mental affliction of the "bit soft" description point to the fact of consanguineous marriages and their evil results.

And so loose are Taffy's morals in this matter that more than one instance of illegitimacy occurring between the members of the same family have come under my direct notice. Criminal assaults

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against children are also of painfully frequent occurrence ; but not by any means do all the miscreants meet the fate they deserve. Welshmen may boast of the “absence of crime,” and, as a self-chosen race, call their country “the land of white gloves,” etc. ; but any one who has ever lived for any length of time among them knows only too well that the records of the law courts—in which latter more perjury is committed in a week than during six months in an English court—do not contain a tenth, or a hundredth, part of the crimes annually perpetrated on the hillsides of Wales.

Whether the Welsh parents imagine that they may perhaps atone for their own misgivings by calling their children by Scriptural names I do not know, but every other boy you meet answers to the name of Hezekiah, Jesse, Jehoshaphat, or Jeremiah. No one seems yet to have hit upon Ananias as a desirable Christian name. But, then, the New Testament is not read by these Bible Christians. Among the “better classes” a distinct leaning is now being shown for such names as Palestine-Parry, Christmas-Lewis, or Jones-Evans.

To the casual passer-by the cottages appear clean and tidy on the whole, but every one who has ever possessed a Welsh maid-servant, to whom I refer elsewhere, knows only too well how deceptive Welsh cleanliness is. They “make clean the

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outside of the cup and platter," but there their efforts cease. Filthiness (like sin itself) is no fault to the Welsh mind so long as it is kept just out of sight, and these maidens, like their mothers, are not particular whether they hide it behind their religious hypocrisy or cover it up with black-lead and whitewash. Indeed, with a few exceptions, the cottages of Wales, with their shining white outer walls and the black-lead (for which Mrs. Taffy has an overwhelming affection) of their interiors cannot fail to remind any one who knows them of the "whited sepulchres"—beautiful without but within full of uncleanness—of the Scribes and Pharisees. They dot the hillsides or line the village street like mirrors reflecting the hearts of their thriftless and self-righteous occupiers.

The most casual passer-by must often have been struck by the glittering array of ornaments and knick-knacks with which Mrs. Taffy decorates the oaken dresser and "Cwpbwrd Tridarn" of her cottage kitchen, and such adjectives as "cosy," "bright," and "cheerful," have been applied by good-natured strangers to the general effect. But a second thought must convince any one that the accumulation of cheap glass vases, paltry trinkets, jugs, teapots, plates, and fragmentary relics of earlier generations of the same ware (which latter are never thrown away, though they were originally nothing more than the cheapest of productions)

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only indicates what a shocking lack of taste prevails in the Welsh cottages. The possessors of this collection of trumpery articles will make a great show of their pretended preference and affection for really old china and antique furniture, but, in reality, they very much prefer the tawdriest goods which the "Cheap Jack" at the fair can offer them; and surely there is no other country in the world where the "potman," as he is called, does such a thriving trade. Even if he visits, as he often does, the same village two or three times a week he will on every occasion be followed by a group of old women, anxiously looking out for something new—and cheap.

Mrs. Taffy has the heart of a magpie for anything that glitters or which is brightly coloured. She can no more resist buying imitations of old lustre ware, crockery that is gay with floral patterns or views of Wales, toys and images of dreadful design and colour, cheap coloured prints representing some scriptural scene, and plush frames inlaid with walnut shells and glue (for Mr. Lloyd George's portrait) than she can resist the decree of the local minister. And with an appalling absence of taste, and an utter indifference to the simplest rules of harmony, this conglomeration of articles—and I have not mentioned one-tenth of them—is heaped upon every available table or shelf, and in every cupboard, of the already limited space of the

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cottage. The very walls are festooned with plates and dishes, and even the floor encircled with black-leaded objects such as smooth round stones, ram's horns, horse-shoes, and old bits of fenders and fire-irons that cannot be of the slightest possible use save as objects upon which Mrs. Taffy can use her beloved black-lead.

In those cottages which have a "parlour" the display is of an even more vulgar character, and if, as we may suppose, the wool mats, gaudy anti-macassars, glass domes of artificial fruit and flowers, and atrocious wall-paper are Mrs. Taffy's first choice, the general effect says still less for her artistic sense than does that of the kitchen. Even when she does possess something really old, such as oak furniture, it is not treated with as much respect as the latest purchase from the "potman's" cart. How often, for example, have we not seen the dresser, or Cwypbwrdd Tridarn—perhaps quite a valuable piece of furniture to those who have an appreciation for its kind—plastered over with wall-paper! Have we not seen antique oaken chairs not only coated over with a thick and wholly unsuitable varnish, which is bad enough, but with their legs most carefully *black-leaded*! Yet in conversation any average Welsh man or woman will, for the moment, impress you with much show of reverence for things of the past, and ancestral lore, and the stranger departs with the thought:

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“How very comforting to feel in these hurrying days that there are still some places left where civilisation has not robbed life of all its old romance, and where people still have time to revere the things of the past !”

But, alas ! as I have suggested in an earlier chapter, the whole affair is a delusion ; Taffy does not trouble himself one little bit about his “family gods.” He would sell them, as well as the memory of his ancestors, if he could, for the visitor’s money ; but if he cannot he covers them up with tawdry wall-paper, black-lead, and a toy-shop collection of the most modern and most worthless things he can find. Any old, spoutless teapot, if it is of a gay colour, or a mug, bearing in gilt letters the words “A Present from Aberystwith”—or somewhere else—or the fragments of some utterly valueless basin or plate, carefully stuck together with dough, is more to him than anything really artistic or antique. But he is crafty enough not to let you think so if he can help it.

Of course the windows of these cottages are seldom, if ever, open, and the blinds of the “parlour” window remain drawn from Sunday to Sunday. Indeed, in nine cases out of ten you will find that the windows have never been made so that they could be opened at all, and the condition of the atmosphere in the room is, in consequence, beyond description. Taffy does not like fresh air,

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and if we consider the insanitary condition of his cottages, and the overcrowding of the bedrooms—father, mother, and a grown-up family sometimes occupying the same “loft,” as they call it—can we wonder that immorality is so common, that consumption is so rampant, and that almost every Welsh girl’s life is wrecked by anæmia and dyspepsia ?

Another curious and absurd characteristic is Taffy’s fondness for duplication. Perhaps this might be excused in cases of twins, and we can scarcely wonder that Mr. Lloyd George’s nice, open face in the plush frame is seen in two places instead of one. But Taffy does not stop there. Little Elizabeth Mary and Ezekiel John are invariably called by their two Christian names, and the wife never dreams of addressing her husband except by his full name, whether that is Cadwalader Jenkins or simple, homely John Jones. The only exception to this peculiarity is that the husband refers to his wife, and the children refer to their mother, as “she.” There are always two “pot dogs” on the mantelshelf—“to match” ; two round-glass paper weights (through which Mr. Lloyd George’s photograph can be seen, cunningly magnified) on the wool mats in the parlour ; two black-leaded ram’s horns, one on either side of the fireplace ; and two black-leaded horseshoes somewhere else. As may be imagined, the effect is always wearisome, but it

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becomes provokingly so sometimes. You may, for instance, be a visitor in the house, and you are sitting quietly by your "parlour" fire when you hear a clock strike "one, two, three," and so up to twenty. Wondering whether they have a unique method of measuring time in Wales, you resort to the kitchen, there to discover the explanation in two stalwart "grandfather's clocks."

And, pondering over these things for an explanation, you come to the conclusion that as Taffy so often has "a wee drap in his e'e"—especially if he is a Nonconformist "teetotaller"—and his spouse a little drop of something in her tea, the happy couple do not feel quite at home on occasions when necessity compels sobriety, so that a duplicate of most things is arranged by way of consolation !

"FLEECE THE SAXON"

or, in fact, any stranger who is within your gates, is the motto written on the heart of every Welsh man, woman, and child. If you cannot do it with some pretence of honesty do it some other way—you may steal if you like, but rob the foreigner you must. And Taffy generally manages it very nicely, with as little inconvenience to himself as possible. Visitors to Wales do not need reminding of the insidious methods which are employed to get at their pockets, of the appalling charges levied by

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lodging-house keepers, and their notorious dishonesty. In other chapters I have dwelt upon this subject to some extent, and perhaps it were wiser to leave the matter at that. For where is the necessity for amplifying a fact which is so well known, and which many readers might well desire to forget?

But there is one peculiar practice reflecting upon the fleecing propensities of Taffy which deserves passing notice. It is this: At one well-known Welsh seaside resort it has become quite the rule for visitors to bring in their own food supplies, and there, any evening of the week, in summer, you may see people walking home with parcels of bread, sugar, tea, and so forth. It is a curious and amusing—perhaps distressing—sight to see a group of hungry cyclists going home, subsequently to a long day's ride, one carrying a jug of milk, another a loaf, and another a joint of meat. And the reason for this is obvious. Mrs. Taffy's reputation as a "shopper" for strangers has been so severely shaken that she has deemed it desirable to make a great show of honesty by refusing to take the responsibility of getting in her visitor's supplies.

But it has been found, times without number, that instead of Mrs. Taffy's getting her little bit in the transactions direct, she has arranged a cunning compromise regarding it with the shopkeeper! And any one who has studied the ways of the wily Welshman knows that the shopkeepers of the

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Principality keep different weights and measures (metaphorically, if not literally speaking), the one set for neighbours, the other for the unsuspecting visitor. It makes little difference, therefore, whether the Englishman is fleeced by his landlady or by the equally astute shopkeeper—for by one or the other, or both, fleeced he certainly is, even though he be a Scotsman. Even a Jew finds it difficult to avoid being “done” by a Taffy—but then it is a matter of “when Greek meets Greek.” It is well known that Wales is the only country in which a Jew cannot live!

To give one example of how Mrs. Taffy, as a landlady, charges, I may relate an incident which I heard quite recently, and which, I am assured, happened in a remote Welsh village. Eggs were scarce, and the visitor who had dreams of fresh, country eggs for breakfast every day was disappointed. Not a single egg, except imported ones, was he presented with. However, on the morning of his departure, to his great joy, a delightfully fresh-looking egg graced his breakfast table. But alas! when he came to pay the bill, all pleasant recollections of that egg vanished, for the last two items on the sheet were as follows. “Fresh Egg 2½. (Markit Pryce). Ware and Tare of Hen 1s.!” The landlady had evidently heard the old jest and, owing to her native lack of humour, had taken it seriously and hoped to make use of it to her own advantage!

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Speaking of eggs reminds me of the practice, almost universal in Wales, which prevails among farmers and other poultry-keepers, of putting away all the eggs laid in early summer, when they are cheap, so that they can be brought out when the visitors arrive in August, and the price is up. Not the slightest attempt is made towards preservation, the eggs being simply stored in boxes or baskets in any convenient place, such as under the bed (where also the potato "sets" are laid out to sprout in early spring!) Of course they are absolutely stale, often rotten, by the time the "season" is in full swing; but Mrs. Taffy does not mind that. She trots round the seaside town with clean white apron and prettily decorated basket of "new-laid, country eggs" at seven or eight for a shilling! A few really fresh ones, if there are any, are put in with the others, and, so as to win your custom, the smiling old dame presses you to accept a bunch of flowers, with her "best wishes for a pleasant holiday," etc. When the supply of "stored" eggs runs out there is always at least one enterprising spirit in the village who is keen enough to go to Liverpool for a crate of Danish, which are useful substitutes. These he distributes, for a consideration, among his friends and neighbours, who retail them as "new-laid." This goes on regularly, in defiance of the law, and it is a fact that can be substantiated beyond all doubt.

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I sometimes wonder if all the Psalm-singing and groaning that one hears going on in the chapels is by way of atonement for these multifarious crimes.

If it has never been your misfortune to see a family group of Taffies at table, pray that it never may be. Not only are manners conspicuously absent, but the food eaten is often of the grossest description. For example, the "parritch" of Wales is bread mixed up with boiling water, and a lump of dripping, butter, or fat of some kind added. This is called "brywes," literally bread or crumbs scalded with the skinmings off stock-pot liquor. The whole family, from the parents down to the latest arrival, partake of this—the national breakfast—served in basins, and one cannot but be struck by the way in which, instead of eating decently, they hang their heads over the said basins, and precipitately shovel the greasy mixture into their mouths. As in the case of the crab (or was it the lobster?), in one of Lewis Carroll's books, the Taffy's mouth is conveyed to his food, instead of the food being conveyed to his mouth. Tea is, of course, always "on tap" in the Welsh kitchen. It is taken with "brywes" and with every meal, without exception; and when it is understood that the tea-pot stands on the hob, boiling the day long, the violent nature of its contents can, perhaps, be imagined. Yet this brew, taken without milk, and drunk while it is hot enough to kill most people, is

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enjoyed by the oldest as well as the youngest round the family board.

And if we consider the amount of rank American bacon—the fatter the better—cut in slabs, often half an inch thick, over which the cheapest and most acrid of those chemical compounds called “vinegar” is copiously poured, can we wonder that there are so many dyspeptics in Wales?

It is utterly absurd to imagine that the average Welsh family cannot afford better food than the above, for Taffy usually pays tenpence per pound for the said bacon (in slices at the village shop), whereas he can buy his own mutton or beef for considerably less. Then, again, he scorns foreign meat “on principle”; but why he does not extend the same principle to the Chicago bacon and tinned salmon, which latter, with pickled cabbage and sliced onions, is much used for a “company tea” on Saturday evenings, or to regale his reverence the visiting preacher on Sundays, it is not easy to understand.

As a matter of fact, there is no poverty in rural Wales when compared with other parts of Britain. Wages are excessively high, and employment so easily obtained that one often has to ask a workman as a special favour if he will come and do a piece of work. At the time of writing labourers can earn 18s. to 22s. a week, ordinary farm hands in most places are being paid 12s. to 14s. a week,

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living in ; harvest wages are 26*s.* or 27*s.* a week, with food, and the usual pay of a general man (often quite a youth) upon a farm, including board and lodging, is £24 to £26 per annum—more than many an Oxford or Cambridge graduate is receiving. In almost every department of work the wages are equally high, and they seldom vary. But Taffy is ever whining about poverty, ever complaining against the supposed wealth of people who live in a different strata of life from that in which he lives, and ever indulging in extravagances of various kinds, such as frequent holidays for trips, funerals, fairs, etc., which are usually considered to be quite beyond the ordinary workman or cottager's ambitions.

But Taffy would not be Taffy if he were not inconsistent. At one moment he is a Poor Working Man, with a big capital P, with all the hardships of life thrust upon his shoulders ; and at the next he is a very lord of creation, puffing out the chest of self-satisfaction, a splendid member of a self-chosen people.

So much has been said of Taffy's conceit that I hesitate to go any further into the subject. But as his failings are the warp and woof of his very being it is quite impossible to avoid repetition.

While there is no doubt that the Welshman's deceitfulness is his strongest point, it is so subtle that much of it may pass unobserved before the

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eyes of the casual visitor. But his ridiculous vanity must be evident to all who have ever had anything to do with him. To the traveller Taffy's absurd boast about the beauties of his country, and its natural resources—though in his heart he has not the slightest appreciation of the one nor any capacity for turning the other to account—are only too well known; and it never seems to strike the Taffy that if its resources had not been developed by “foreigners” they would be as dormant to-day as they were before the Roman invasion.

Get one of these loyal natives in the right mood, and he will provide interminable entertainment, for all who are willing to listen, by his display of vanity and empty brag. Snowdon, he will tell you, with an air that ought to impel conviction, is the highest mountain in the world; he will contend that the gold mines of Merioneth and the pearl beds of Conway are of universal renown; that it was the Welsh who conquered the Saxons, and not the reverse, as the history books have it; that St. George (not the modern one) was a Welshman, and fought the dragon at the village, which, it is supposed, still bears his name; that the Welsh “nation” could get along quite comfortably without having any connection with any other country—especially England. He will, with ridiculous solemnity, tell you that America owes all her success to the number of Welshmen who have emigrated thither since the

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days of the mythical Madoc, and in the same breath assert that his poetry (although he himself probably knows not a single line of it) is so transcendently great that ordinary people (meaning Englishmen) cannot appreciate it, any more than they can the glories of his chopped carrots, which stand unrivalled (evidently requiring an “acquired taste”). And as a final outburst he will extol the succulency of Welsh mutton (though he prefers Chicago bacon) and its supremacy over all others.

But he pretends not to know that every day this mutton is being superseded by that of England, that Wiltshire or Southdown blood is being infused into every Welsh flock as an attempt to bring the mutton of the Principality up to the requirements of the modern market. Thus, again, do we find that Taffy, even when it is a matter of mutton, must perforce fall back upon the support of England—the country upon which, even though he may loathe its very name, his very existence depends.

CHAPTER VI

FAIRS AND FUNERALS

WHOEVER it may have been who reminded us that the Englishman takes his pleasure sadly, it is evident that he had never met a Welshman, for you could not afford the latter a greater treat than a funeral. He can scent one mile away, and, no matter whether the deceased is a relative or not, he must attend—regretting only that he was not able to be “in at the death.” He generally manages to take a holiday for the occasion—usually without asking leave of his employer, if he has one—and will tramp long leagues for the privilege and evident satisfaction of seeing the remains of one of his own kind safely disposed of.

You may notice these black specks of morbid humanity dotting the far country-side like crows, and converging with hasty steps to the house of the dead. Like vultures coming out of the distant blue to congregate around the carcass of the tottering horse or stricken bullock which they have marked for their own, these Welsh men

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and women flock to the scene of the funeral to fill their insatiable gullets with the carrion of morbid curiosity. So overpowering is the interest which Taffy takes in this subject, that long before the demise takes place he smacks his lips in sweet anticipation. The women delight to crowd in and about the house of the dying, like flies round a honey-pot, without having any apparent respect for such an occasion ; and every little detail that passes is eagerly swallowed. The local carpenter, who is undertaker and general " M.C." of funerals, is the hero of the hour. The village oven is fired to prepare the " baked-meats," for Taffy still keeps up that heathenish custom of feasting on such occasions, and all business is thrown out of gear. It is, of course, very disappointing if an invalid, who has been sick enough to give promise of a funeral within a week, suddenly recovers. In fact, it is so exasperating that Cadwalader Jones immediately " goes on the spree," while his wife resorts to slandering the convalescent neighbour who has, so to speak, been disobliging enough to take the very cream of anticipated excitement out of her mouth.

Not long ago an instance came under my direct notice which serves to show Taffy's unspeakable irreverence and inhuman attitude towards matters of this sort. An old widow woman, who was believed to possess a " bit of money," was dying,

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and it so happened that the village joiner, who was also local undertaker, had for years been anything but a friend of hers. A petty quarrel had left each a sworn enemy of the other. The joiner, however, from purely mercenary motives, thought it desirable to make his peace with the old lady, which he did, or pretended to do, for she was too far gone to know him from her own son. However, both he and his family suddenly began to make what charitably disposed persons might have taken to be amends for past grievances. They were constant in their attentions at the house of the dying. When the joiner was not sitting by the bedside, shrewdly calculating whether the coffin would be in oak or elm, whether his unconscious prey was really worth as much as people said she was, he would be down in the kitchen making a mockery of sympathy to the daughter or son. And, no doubt, the troublesome question would often cross his mind, "Suppose that I am not asked to do the job after all? It would not be an unheard-of thing for the undertaking to be given into the hands of — at —," the nearest market town. His fears were, however, not realised, but his hopes were, for when the long-expected funeral occurred he was the proud undertaker, the field-marshal of the soul-stirring event. But the incident does not end there. This callous hypocrite and his family continued for some time their assumed friendly

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advances towards the bereaved household. Indeed, they seemed even more sympathetic than they had ever been before. But one day their attentions abruptly ceased. No longer did the undertaker or his wife and daughters visit the house of the deceased's relations. In fact the latter were rudely "cut" in the street. People wondered. Had the old feud not been forgotten? . . . It had—until the bill was paid!

From obvious motives I refrain from entering too minutely into the details of a Welsh funeral, to which men, women, and children flock with such hungry inquisitiveness. But although the obsequies of the departed afford Taffy such a supreme opportunity for donning his beloved black, although they afford him an occasion for taking a holiday, and one upon which he may wring his anguished soul with the mournful hymns he loves, it is not easy at first quite to fathom the nature of the unique attractiveness which "a planting," as he calls it, has for him.

Granted that one half of the "mourners" wish to pay a last respect to the departed relative or friend—what does the other half want there? If you watch the procession as it goes, the men walking first, and the women and children following in the rear (mixed mourning, like mixed bathing, is out of all order and decency in holy Wales), you may be surprised to hear the lively chatter that is

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maintained. The topics of the hour are discussed with irreverent freedom ; the ladies suck “ Paradise drops,” aptly chosen for the occasion, and their lords chew tobacco. Though smoking is not, apparently, quite the thing on such occasions, the quid of “ twist ” is a pleasant substitute that can be enjoyed without being detected, and this is only another instance of that Welsh peculiarity already alluded to—I mean the supreme indifference with which Taffy’s conscience estimates a breach of etiquette, or decency, or morality, so long as it is hidden from other people’s eyes. In easy-going Wales, let me remind my readers, you are never a sinner until you are found out.

So insatiable is the Taffy’s appetite for funerals, and so keenly does he enjoy them that, if possible, they are always arranged to take place on a Saturday afternoon, when work is over and all are able to attend. Not very long ago I was informed of an incident which serves to illustrate how deeply this craze for a “ popular funeral ” is infused into Taffy’s very blood. An old man, who was a local preacher, and the oldest inhabitant of his village, and a few other things of great parochial importance, died on a Monday, and from the nature of the disease which caused his death it was considered likely that the burial would take place as speedily as possible, especially as the weather was exceptionally hot. But would not an early disposal

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of the body be likely to have an adverse effect upon the popularity of the funeral? And would not the "planting" of such a notable person be likely to constitute a "record" in funerals if only it were given a fair chance? The upshot was that the funeral did not take place until the following Saturday afternoon. The body had all the week been lying in a small room (with windows tightly closed), while in the next apartment—with only a door between—lay the deceased's invalid wife. Common decency forbids me to attempt to describe the condition of the body during the greater part of the week—a description which I was given by the undertaker and others. Let it suffice to say that many of the bearers had to relinquish their task, and that even the average Taffy, who was not directly inconvenienced, felt that such an outrage against the ordinary laws of hygiene was not counterbalanced even by the exceptionally fine funeral. But that the incident will be forgotten—and others of its kind repeated, I have not the remotest doubt.

Wishing to get to the bottom of Jones's love for funerals, I have often asked him to explain his reasons for indulging in such a melancholy form of recreation, and the nearest that I have ever been able to get to the secrets of his heart is this, and it is probably somewhere near the truth. He will not admit very readily that he likes the half-holiday,

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black clothes, lugubrious incantations, and so forth, but if you gain his confidence (when he is in his cups, for example), he will whisper in your ear that the haunting fear of his life is that he, when his time comes, should not have a "popular funeral," and that if he does not attend these functions in his day there is a possibility that his own funeral will be a lonely one. Thus the root of the matter is gross selfishness and conceit; and while he no doubt enjoys his afternoon, and the immense importance of being seen walking in the procession, and so forth, he is really there to keep alive a custom which he hopes may survive until his departure takes place. But it does not say much for the sincerity of the popular esteem by which he hopes his mortal remains may be attended!

These facts help one to understand much of that uncouthness so common in Wales in regard to this matter. There is no other country in the world, for instance, where a man will not raise his hat, as a mark of respect for the dead, when he meets a funeral; but Taffy keeps his hat firmly planted on his head, as though it grew there; and no civilised person who knows Wales has failed to remark that sign of utter boorishness.

The average Taffy will leave his plough to gape at a passing funeral, which, as a "mourner," he has happened to miss, and he will come to the field gate, and lean over it, with his pipe in his

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mouth, as the emblem of sheer indifference, or with his tongue lolling out, from unsuppressed excitement. And this clod of humanity is a fair specimen of a race which prides itself on its spiritual-mindedness, and claims for itself the front seat in the synagogue of righteousness. The grossest nigger would surely behave in a more seemly manner.

But let us not forget that it is servile to be respectful in Wales—presumably even to the dead.

A fair, to Jones, is only second in importance to a funeral, even if the said fair consists, as the majority of them now do, of nothing more than a cartload of little pigs, a lonely cow or two, a few “injer-rock” stalls, and a vulgar individual selling the cheap crockery already mentioned by “Dutch auction.” But these things would appear to have an eternal fascination for Taffy, who has a Jew’s regard for anything pertaining to barter. To “make a bargain” is the crowning object of his day, and he will haggle over the purchase of a pig or a pound of nails as though he were buying a diamond-mine. It is in his blood to expect to be cheated—seeing that he and his neighbours always take advantage of one another if they possibly can—and hours will be spent in argument ere a cow or a sheep changes hands. The only difference between the Welshman and the Jew in this matter

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is that the former drinks and the latter does not—at least, not while he is “on the make.” Taffy conducts all his business—real or pretended—in the dark corners of those ill-ventilated dens, called “back-parlours,” which adjoin the stable-yards of every public-house. There he swallows beer copiously, and smokes the rankest of tobacco, while he enjoys the exhilaration of “making a bargain.” And the result of this procedure is, that unless he gets fired out into the light of day by the tongue of his exasperated wife, the man who has had least beer gets the best of the bargain.

Taffy is, however, so keen to prolong the feast of barter (and the flow of beer) that when the price is mutually agreed upon, there still remains the question of “luck.” This is a kind of final seal to the transaction, and consists of the vendor’s returning to the purchaser a part of the money paid, which amounts to what any ordinary people would call “discount for cash.” But it is a subject for argument in itself, and no loyal Welshman yet lived who did not make the most of it as such. The “luck ” is of course spent on beer.

Although Jones is, in a sense, shrewd enough, he would be nowhere if Mrs. Jones did not take good care of him. On fair-days she contrives to get her black-leading done early, and to arrive in time to relieve him of his money if he has had

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anything entrusted to him to sell, and he is then told off with a sixpence, begrudgingly allowed. The result of this is, that he manages, by starting in the small hours of the morning, to get what is sometimes called "a skinful" before his better half arrives on the scene; and if he has been indiscreet enough to spend more money than he should have done, the sight of the collapsible, beer-soaked Jones, meekly suffering public execration before his angered and undignified "missus," is a sight which once seen can never be forgotten, and one in which his unsympathetic friends of the tavern take the keenest enjoyment. The Welshman, however, who is fortunate enough to have a wife who will join him in his fair-day bouts is one of those rare specimens of humanity who enjoys the envy of all his countrymen.

We have already noticed how very delicately Nature has balanced the Welsh mind. At the best it hovers on the brink of hysteria, so that the slightest excitable influence upsets its equilibrium. The ministers know this, and so does the village publican. The "All-prizes-and-no-blanks" man at the "injer-rock" booth knows it too, and so does the "auctioneer" who presides over the crockery which is arrayed upon the pavement at the fair. All these conspire to catch the Welshman "on the hop," and each has his own subtle method for the undoing of his customers.

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The “injer-rock” vendor, for example, harangues the crowd with a cockney-like air of assurance, and his “Pull away, pull away, ladies and gentlemen; all prizes and no blanks—if the young men won’t pay for their sweethearts, I’ll do so myself,” etc., etc., acts like a dose of stimulant upon “Young Wales,” who, with Woodbine and fringe, is a very gay dog indeed. And forthwith the man at the booth sets the marble spinning and the bell agoing, and gives lavishly of his coloured sticks of sugar and chalk to all the abashed damsels who pass by. Close at hand the pottery man bawls out the prices and qualities of his goods, together with that cheap and vulgar banter peculiarly his own, to the group of women, old and young, who collect around him. Presently he sends the dish he cannot sell crashing upon the pavement; at that the women shriek, while the crowd surges toward the “auctioneer,” who, seeing that his little advertisement has borne fruit, sends a teapot into a dozen pieces after the dish. Another is held up, all hands reach for it, and away it goes, “gratis and for nothing,” into the middle of them. Before the ensuing scramble has subsided, a cup and saucer are put up to the tune of 6*d.*—4*d.*—2*d.*? and, finding no claimant, go clattering to the ground. By this time indifference has grown into excitement, excitement to delirium. The air reeks with “extra-strong,” bad tobacco, and beer;

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drunken louts reel through the crowd arm-in-arm ; droning, perhaps, a Welsh hymn, interjected with curses and “Come and have another.” Babies scream, the bell rings louder, hysterical girls yell with empty laughter when the yokels squirt cheap scent down their necks, pandemonium of the coarsest kind reigns, and Taffy’s senses have long exceeded the limits of control. He is undone. The Welsh purse-strings are relaxed, and he is the prey of any human hawk that comes along ; and no one now knows it better than the “injer-rock-man ” and the “potter,” unless it be the Jew, who, under such conditions, is able to do a brilliant trade in watches and jewellery a little farther down the street. This upsetting of the Cymric balance is so easily achieved that there is little wonder, perhaps, that Jones, old and young, male and female, should possess, in sober moments, a cunning and suspicious nature. It seems as though he were providentially accommodated with an instinctive sense of his own weakness which, excepting on the occasion of such tempestuous indulgences as fair-days and funerals, serves to ballast and sustain the flimsiness of his ill-governed mind.

The reader will notice in other pages what an immoral effect this Welsh hysteria—whether it is brought about by “injer-rock,” beer, Eisteddfods, revivals, peppermints, or “potmen”—has upon

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these peculiar people. Suffice it to say, for the present, that “the moon sees more mischief (*i.e.* in Wales) in one night than the sun does in a thousand years”—which is saying a very great deal.

CHAPTER VII

EDUCATION, ART, AND POLITICS

NO people, as a class, clamour more loudly about education than the Cymry. yet, even though England has done her level best to send the light of her knowledge into the outer darkness of Wales, the latter is still wrapped in clouds of gloom.

In intellectual development the Welsh, as a race, lag far behind other peoples. Anthropologists declare—and we have every reason to believe that they are right—that the Welsh are, physically, inferior to all other civilised races, if, indeed, they are entitled to be included among the civilised races at all; and as Taffy's intellectual infirmities and moral delinquencies are to some extent explained by his low origin, this subject, on which we have touched already, may be considered a little more at large.

In Wales to-day there are two main types of people, the one being tall and fair, the other short and dark. The former only are, according to most authorities, true Celts, and the latter, who constitute at least two-thirds of the Welsh population,

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are nothing more nor less than the descendants of the pre-Aryan aborigines of Britain, and belong to the same low caste as those specimens of humanity which inhabit the Basque provinces of Spain, and those other remnants of the great Mongolian race, the Tartars, Magyars, Finns, and Turks. Let any one who doubts this contention consider for one moment what manner of man the descendant of this pre-Aryan aborigine is, and it will not be my fault if he fail to see in him all the more salient features of the Mongolian. These are, the black hair, low forehead, full lips, dark, beady eyes, and large, low-set ears; and without doubt the craftiness, vanity, ignorance, and fanaticism of this type of Welshman—who poses as a Celt—are partly traceable to the same source. The unprejudiced reader has only to call to mind one or two of the more prominent Welsh M.P.'s to find the above traits distinctly in evidence. Their speeches are characterised by a vain show of boastfulness, an utter disregard for truth, gross exaggeration, a contempt for patriotism and statesmanship, cleverly veiled abuse, and an ungoverned flood of passion which is as unintellectual as it is vulgar. The most beloved of these Welsh Members, who is never tired of telling English people that he is not one of them, but a “foreigner” (we thank heaven for that), may, perhaps, feel rather less flattered when he learns that he—as a typical specimen of this class

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of Welshman—is none other than a revolutionary upstart of a breed of humanity that now, in its last, lingering days, clings to life in those dark corners of the earth which I have mentioned above.

These facts relating to Taffy's origin throw a flood of light upon the question of his intellectual and moral failings, and to some extent they are his excuse. His descent he cannot remedy, his forebears he could not choose, though he might try, perhaps, by inter-marriage with the higher and more cultured races, to improve his stock, instead of strengthening all its worst defects by close in-breeding. But every unprejudiced inquirer will admit that the greatest obstacle to progress in Welsh learning, the greatest bar to educational advancement, is and has been the so-called religion of the Principality since Welsh history began (which was contemporaneous with the coming of Charles of Bala according to the C.M.s !).

This being so, it is just possible that our remote posterity may witness the regeneration of the Welsh, when they shall have thrown off the unholy yoke of their canting, extortionate, and fanatical Non-conformist priesthood.

Rather than being the teachers of the people, the ministers and their satellites “shut up the kingdom of heaven against men,” and throw dust into their eyes. It is their business so to do, lest their perfidious deeds should be perceived by their

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deluded victims, upon whom all livelihood depends.

Any initiative on the part of the people is choked off by the persecution of the so-called leaders of religion. This is only too obvious if we consider that when a Welshman gets outside his own country, where freedom is greater and the environment more cultured, he often "goes on his own" with tolerable success. He has found that even the arid plains of Patagonia are preferable to the Land of his Fathers, and that Liverpool or Manchester are infinitely better than Carnarvon or Wrexham, though he dare not openly say so. At any rate he is fairly safe when once out of Wales, to which he seldom, if ever, returns.

I have already referred to Welsh literature, to its poverty and its dreadfully elementary character. Cambria, which we have often been asked to believe is the home of romance, has never produced a single novelist of note. If an impartial literary critic were asked to name any book dealing with Welsh character which might be considered classical, he would probably give George Borrow's "Wild Wales" as the best of the more ancient ones, and Mr. Watts-Dunton's "Aylwin" as a modern masterpiece. Charles Kingsley's "Two Years Ago" might also be mentioned on account of its descriptions of Snowdonia, and Penygwryd in particular. But all three authors are, of course, English.

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‡ Ephemeral writers, possessed of a facile pen, have, it is true, won something of a public with crude stories of Welsh life ; but Wales can point to no novelist like Meredith or Hardy, not to mention Thackeray or Scott.

Again, we find that the scenery of Wales, her antiquarian lore, and her natural history, have all been faithfully described, not by one of her own sons—save Pennant, who is better known to English readers of White's "Selborne" than he is to Wales—but by such well-known names as Arthur G. Bradley, S. Baring Gould, M. J. Baddeley, H. E. Forrest, and other "foreigners."

The Welshman has not the ability to make literature even in his own language, and before there can be any hope for him in this high plane of culture he must give up thinking that the stringing together of rhyming verses is poetry, and that the blasphemous or wholly colourless articles in the vernacular press are literature. He must also remember that bardic names, long, matted hair, and an unwashed condition, do not make a bard—at least, not beyond the borders of Wales.

Go where you will in Wales you cannot fail to be struck by the poverty of her architecture. She has few fine buildings which she can claim as her own. The four Cathedrals, if dignified by age, are insignificant compared with those of England in architectural features, and there are few parish

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churches which inspire the passer-by with any sensation of religious or artistic aspiration. As for the chapels—and, seeing that Wales prides herself upon being a Nonconformist country, we might expect these to be exceptionally fine—they are an insult to the Almighty, an offering of Cain. They are a stain upon the venerable soil on which they stand, and an outrage upon the feelings of cultured people. The quintessence of ugliness unadorned, they kill all natural beauty that may surround them; and was it not such “religious buildings” as these that were to Ruskin “the damnablest of all”?

As every schoolboy knows, the Welshman can take no credit to himself for those really grand old ruins, such as the castles of Conway and Carnarvon, which lend so thrilling a touch of historical romance and architectural beauty to a land which, as a whole, is singularly destitute of these features. And the visitor may look in vain throughout the length and breadth of the Principality for any great houses of interest. Where are the Chatsworths of Wales? Where the Holyroods? It is true that, here and there, we may chance to come across some fine residential castles, such as those of Penrhyn and Powis (which are, together with their noble owners, despised by Taffy), but for the most part they owe what artistic beauty they possess to nature, or to Norman and English art. Wales has no architec-

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tural "style" of her own, unless it be exemplified in those hideous chapels referred to, which "dissent" from every canon of art and beauty. And, by way of showing what appalling ignorance exists among Welsh builder-architects, I am reminded of an incident which occurred to me two or three years ago. Seeing a Bethel of rather exceptional proportions being erected, I had the curiosity to ask the architect (a Welshman of some repute at his craft) what style of architecture the façade was intended to represent. (It appeared to me to be a hopeless muddle of every conceivable type of incongruity, with a remarkable tendency to make one feel depressed.) The architect replied, with evident pride, "Well, indeed, it is ferry like Tabernacle, —— (giving the name of a remote village), but it is better; the yaller bricks round the windows iss like Ezekiel Evans's new shop, and the door the same ass Owen Owens did put to hiss new bake-house."

All, or nearly all, of the many country residences in Wales are owned and occupied, not by Welsh people, but by retired Englishmen, and, as may well be supposed, the best of the land is gradually passing into the latter's hands, much to Taffy's discomfiture. But the average Welshman, when he has made some money in alien lands, does not know what to do with it. If he returns to his native heath he immediately lapses into his bread-and-butter-and-tea life

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again, and there he stays. To get beyond a certain point he is unable. Beauty and refinement are foreign to him. He does not understand what they mean; but he hates the Saxon none the less who builds a comfortable house on Welsh soil, and who spends his money in making that soil more productive and beautiful than it ever could be in a Taffy's untutorable hands.

We find that the Principality is equally destitute in the realm of painting and the allied arts. She has never produced a single man or woman who has earned for himself or herself even a parochial fame in these fields of culture, though she would claim Gibson as one of her sons! The Royal Cambrian Academy of Art, at Conway, is no credit to the natives of Wales, for it was founded by a Scotsman, with the aid of a few English friends. And one can scarcely find a single Welsh painter among the numerous exhibitors at, and members of, that institution. From the President down to the curator nearly all are "foreigners"; and we may thank them, rather than the natives of Wales, for rescuing that fine old Elizabethan mansion ("Plas Mawr") which is the home of the Cambrian Academy from desecration by the "clouted shoon" of an "infant school," to whose tender mercies Taffy had sacrilegiously resigned it. If the Welshman possesses such a fund of imagination, poetry, and romance, why, I ask, does he not reveal it? To

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the unprejudiced and most casual observer he is utterly devoid of any one of these higher attributes of culture. Yet he himself—proud member of a self-chosen people—is conceited enough to imagine that the rest of the world is at his feet.

Politically the Welshman is, as I have already pointed out, just what he is told to be by the birds of prey who build their nests in high places, whence they shriek continuously “Come and be one of Us.” He is of course anti-English, and his idea of politics and statesmanship is a peculiar one. Let, for example, some Welsh nondescript get elected for a wayside constituency, let him take the oath of allegiance to His Majesty King Edward VII., and he forthwith earns for himself a hero’s crown by violating that oath and by spitting contemptible allegations against England’s patriots, soldiers, and statesmen (without whom both he and his country would have been at the back of beyond long ago), by casting his solemn vows to the winds, and by generally playing the unscrupulous cad. Then all his people join their hands together and shout with one voice, “Long live Tomos Jones” (or William Evans or Dafydd Owen as the case may be), “Long live the Uncrowned King of Wales.” And all the people shout “Amen,” and sing with discordant voice “Hen Wlad fy Nhadau.” That is about the length and breadth of a Welsh M.P.’s first taste of glory in the eyes of his constituents. But mark his

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progress. If he means to get on he will play his cards in a wonderfully cunning fashion. It is a Cabinet Minister that he probably desires to be; and to attain that dignity he must not only keep his people at his back, but behave himself a little better at Westminster than he does in Wales. The process is a long one, perhaps, but he doesn't mind that. Welshmen never count time. During that period, however, he finds that he must play a double game. He has to obey his leader at Westminster, and yet keep peace with his friends at home. It is not difficult to do the latter, seeing that they have been sufficiently hoodwinked, and are likely to remain so for some time. So he acts the faithful dog to his leader in the House, and, when occasion arises, ventures upon a few well-chosen words, which are immediately telegraphed to the various Welsh "rags," in which they can be read by his faithful adherents, who again all join their hands together and shout with one voice, "Long Live the Uncrowned King of Wales." Sometimes, however, even the head that does not wear a crown is uneasy. The budding politician feels that patience is giving out at home. The promises faithfully given—that this or the other grievance would assuredly be wiped out as soon as he got into Parliament—have not been fulfilled. He explains that, of course, it was not his fault, and throws a bite of Welsh Disestablishment to the unsatisfied ones, which they chew

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gratefully for a while. Sooner or later, however, even that loses its flavour. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." But he is ready for the next emergency, and stirs up a "Down-with-the-Lords" rebellion. Then when that gets played out, "Wales for the Welsh" is put into the political gramophone, and all the big Cymric ears flap forwards, or are pricked up, to listen. As a final resource, if all else fails he will go down to the troubled constituency in person, and preach fireworks and Anglophobia in its many chapels. But he avoids that, if possible, for by so doing he loses prestige at Westminster, which is more valuable than ten thousand chapel meetings, and, besides, it begins to seem a little *infra dig*. He generally manages, however, to sop his countrymen fairly successfully (if he is clever enough to get to Westminster he is quite equal to that), and to keep them in a sort of faithful adherence until an opportunity occurs for elevation. It may be a Cabinet Minister's office, or merely a knighthood, that he expects will descend upon him (to keep him quiet, as one gives a bone to a yelping dog). But in any case he very quickly becomes either a Tory or a Churchman, usually both, on the grounds of respectability, or he vanishes into a fat and comfortable middle-class nonentity, taking good care not to return to Wales till he is forgotten, if he ever returns at all.

To any one who does not know the shallow

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transparency of the average Welsh mind, its utter want of ballast and lack of independence, the humbug with which the Welsh M.P. feeds his herd of ignorant voters is almost beyond comprehension. The latter will suffer any red-herring to be trailed across their track, and grab at any bait which the astute aspirant for a Cabinet Minister's pension may dangle before them. The world has never produced a more unscrupulous and self-interested hypocrite than the Welsh M.P. who springs from Nonconformist stock. He has all the wiles of a serpent and the slipperiness of an eel.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAND OF SONG

THERE has been so much nonsense talked about the “Welsh National Eisteddfod”—which my readers may pronounce “oysterpod” for convenience—that most people have taken it for granted that it is something very fine indeed—a kind of Olympia of learning, at which are assembled all those who are most fitted to represent the arts of music, painting, poetry, and other branches of culture. But let any one with an impartial mind attend one of these gatherings, and he will find that both the National Eisteddfod and any of the smaller meetings of the same kind are almost wholly farcical so far as culture, or anything else of an elevating character, is concerned. Or he will be convinced that, if the National Eisteddfod is the great annual festival at which the chosen leaders in the fine arts of the Principality display their achievements, it is a very sorry show indeed.

It is to the “bards,” perhaps, that public atten-

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tion is most curiously drawn when an Eisteddfod is announced, and to the Welsh mind the "chairing" of the "chief bard" is no doubt the principal feature of this national function. But what is a Welsh bard? He may be anybody—loafer, cobbler, farmer or parson—who has an elementary knowledge of making metrical verses, and who adopts, or has had conferred upon him, with great ceremony, a "bardic title," which is merely a *nom-de-guerre* by which he is known among his friends and admirers. But that scarcely any of these verses with which the rustic aspirants for bardic fame overflow, and to which you may listen by the hour—supposing you have the patience to endure them—are worth repeating, is the verdict of every unbiassed critic who has ever been unfortunate enough to hear them. They are, as a rule, nothing more nor less than vapid sentiment of the milk-and-water type, entirely devoid of original thought or style, or a jingle of lines such as those given overleaf. Their main charm appears to consist, not in any of those features which go to make even moderately good literature, but in vain alliteration and a wholesale adoption of rhyme for rhyme's sake.

Anything, in fact, which has to the Welsh ear some rhythm, anything that the inspired "poet" can repeat in his thin, quavering, *falsetto* voice for the edification of his compatriots, is considered very

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fine. The Welshman is much too lachrymose by nature to attempt anything humorous, but he will recite, with the solemnity of an owl, trashy ditties which, for example's sake, may be likened to the following :

Oh, I have a brother Joe,
Who wass keep a little show,
And the man who take the tickets
He wass one for playing crickets.

Chorus—audience joining in :

Wass you ever see ? Wass you 'ever see ?
Wass you ever see such a jolly time before ?

At which all the people shout "encore," and while a title, such as "The Welsh Nightingale," is being bestowed with much ceremony upon the blushing bard, a rival "singer" is ready with another inspiration such as this :

Oh, I have a sister Jane,
Who wass anything but sane ;
If you want her for a wife
You can have her 'pon my life.
Wass you ever see, etc.

Then the excitement grows to fever pitch ; there is wrangling among the adjudicators, and fighting between the champions of the new-fledged "bards," which is only quelled by yet another aspirant for fame who, raising himself on a chair, shouts out more doggerel of the same description.

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There is often much heated argument over the selection of the "bardic title," which is by no means always so flattering to the stranger's ears as the one given above. For example, to take a few modern instances, Dr. the Rev. Spinther James is familiarly titled "Spinther"; Mr. E. Vincent Evans (Secretary to the Eisteddfod Association) is known as "Vinsent"; Sir Marchant Williams as "Marsiant," while the redoubtable "Llew Tegid" (I forget his real name) is affectionately called "Llew" (for short) by all and sundry.

And some of the bearers of these bardic names are so proud of them that they have them written in full upon their travelling bags when more important but less conceited people would be content with the usual initials of their legitimate name.

But a bard would not be a bard if he did not suffer from a chronic attack of "swelled head"; and the reader will not need to be reminded that there never was a more fictitious title than "bard" bestowed upon any one than that given to these illiterate professors of poetry. Never were such rudimentary and utterly empty effusions offered to a listening public at any national exhibition of art or culture as at these meetings of the Cymry; and as the Eisteddfod is ever made the occasion for reference to the great departed in literature and song, I may repeat the question put in an earlier chapter:

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Where is this literature ? If it is so national and so inspiring, why is it not in the hands of the people ?

It may be that the “Gorsedd,” a curious, not unpicturesque kind of bardic Witenagemote, to which none are admitted until they have passed some extremely simple tests in prosody and the knowledge of “Welsh literature,” may yet possess some little interest on account of its antiquity, but beyond that it is an empty function, absolutely devoid of any edifying feature. Who, for instance, has not wondered—save the Welsh themselves ; and all their geese are swans—what peculiar merit this or that person who is “chaired” as “chief bard” at the Eisteddfod could possess ? Why the wreath of oak leaves ? What has he achieved, after all, that should occasion so much parade and mummery ? Nothing that could not be done, and is done every week, by any fairly intelligent public-school boy. It is possible that Taffy’s distressing want of humour (he has not one atom of it), his deeply rooted conservatism, and his self-conceit, may account for the perpetuation of this annual puppet-show. At any rate, there are no “bards” in Wales to-day, whatever there might have been before the sacred groves of Anglesey were demolished ; and it does not do to take too much on trust in the Land of Song. But with illiterate, bigoted, and unwashed heroes of an hour, each bearing proudly his identifying

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title and cheap notoriety, the country literally swarms.

Important as the “bard” may be, however, it is doubtful whether he is held in more popular esteem by the Cymry than the “artist” in vocal music. Four-fifths of the time occupied by the Eisteddfod is absorbed in “singing,” and at local functions of the sort there is often nothing more. Competitions in part-singing between rival choirs occupy the greater part of the time from morning to night, and what are in Wales called “cantattas” fill up the intervals. It seems that Taffy’s internal accommodation for song is insatiable. We have seen that he indulges copiously in it (without instrumental music, of course, which is idolatry) at chapel on Sundays, and at home between the hours of “worship.” He sings—or tries to sing—nearly every evening of the week, year in and year out. He sings in solitude or in company; when he is drunk or when he is sober. With his infantile breath he is expected to sing, and he sings through life so long as he has any breath left with which to sing. And the stranger who visits the National Eisteddfod may well enter with the conviction that here, at this great gathering of the chosen voices of the Land of Song, he will hear something in vocal music of which he has never dreamed. *He does.* And he very soon comes out again, for instead of his soul being uplifted by the heaven-born sounds he had

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anticipated, it is tormented with mental indigestion in a most acute form. It was all very well to listen to these men's voices when they were far away in the grey evening valley of Bethesda. At a distance that was a soulful music, full of a simple pathos that awakened the slumbering grandeur of silent Nant Ffrancon as no other sound ever could. But here, in this place, the male voice choir of —, or the ladies' choir of —, or a combination of both, often makes the most dreadfully discordant noises that ever ear of mortal man suffered. There seems to be no restraint, no science, and but little harmony. Even the conductor appears to lose all control of himself ; the Welsh section of the audience becomes hysterical, the men stamp upon the floor, the women weep, the children call for their mothers, and discord and chaos often reign supreme both in choir and audience.

Why then this proud title, "The Land of Song," which would seem to indicate that in Wales we should find the highest excellence in vocal music ? Why this vain boast and fictitious notoriety ? The visitor to Wales may spend weeks and weeks and hear nothing except some excessively hearty singing in church or chapel, a little rough part-singing when men gather together on the village bridge of an evening, where they croon their native melodies, what time the tripper from Yorkshire or Lancashire (forgetful of the fact that there is more

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music in his own Dewsbury or Bolton than in the whole of North Wales) smokes his evening cigar and says to his complacent spouse "My! 'Ow they can sing, these Welsh!" And up to a certain point he may be right: there is perhaps some tolerably good choral singing in the quarry districts, and the choirs there often sing with some taste and natural feeling; the trebles and basses are passable, the altos fair, but the tenors usually very hard, preferring to force out their upper notes by sheer muscular strength rather than to produce a pure tone. The sight reading of these choirs is not good, nor is their musicianship sound, for the simple reason that the conductor is seldom a trained musician, the Celtic temperament and national feeling of the members of a choir making them prefer to get up their work for the Eisteddfod under native, or, better still, local instruction, to importing an efficiently trained, though foreign, instructor.

The Eisteddfodau are much to blame for this state of affairs. Here we find that the petty competition between choirs, carefully classed according to numbers, the rivalry between districts, and the enthusiasm of supporters, have completely eliminated any desire to further art for its own sake.

An ungoverned keenness to win prizes somehow—anyhow—has stifled all hope of progress in Welsh

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music. The test pieces chosen for competition at the Eisteddfodau are usually of the most meagre description—an anthem and a part-song being generally set—and the choirs that are to compete spend weeks over these, often memorising the parts and singing without book. How much better would it be were the authorities to set a complete work to be got up by the competing choirs, out of which chosen pieces would be selected by the judges at the time of competition! This would afford a real test of musicianship, and a careful choice of works by the authorities would do much in a few years to elevate the public taste and improve the standard of music in Wales.

The concerts held in the evenings are a great feature of the Eisteddfod; and what do we find here, where an orchestra has been engaged, and where there would be a real chance of doing something artistic? An oratorio or so. There are usually a few miscellaneous concerts; but the majority of the choirs devote themselves to rendering an oratorio, or perhaps two oratorios, nearly always *The Messiah*, *Hymn of Praise*, *Elijah*, *St. Paul*, or some other familiar or standard work.

One would not, of course, wish to speak lightly of the above great works; but a “progressive musical people” should certainly stretch out the hand of fellowship to the notable composers of the day, and attempt to justify their existence as musicians by

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performing the great masterpieces of their art. When, for example, has either of the three greatest of all works for chorus—*Bach's Mass* in B minor, Beethoven's *Missa Solleennis*, or Brahms's *German Requiem*, been performed in Wales? What attempt is there to introduce our best modern music, that of Elgar and others? No! Welshmen will not take the trouble to look at them; they would sooner get up their petty part-songs and anthems for the Christmas Eisteddfod in their local Bethel than spend a little trouble in endeavouring to remedy their shortcomings by rubbing shoulders with the progress of the day, and by recognising the fact that there are a great many more things in the musical world than have ever yet been dreamed of in Welsh philosophy.

We have had occasion previously to mention how ill-balanced the Welsh mind is, but nowhere, excepting during a revival, does it exhibit such symptoms of unrestrained excitement as at these singing contests. And no one who has not witnessed one of these competitions can form any idea of the disorder which prevails when a Welsh choir is undergoing its "test." It is not surprising, therefore, that, in singing, as well as in instrumental music, the prizes are so often awarded to English competitors. The chosen champions of the Land of Song are frequently beaten—hopelessly outclassed on their own ground—and this of course is a very

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sore point with some Taffies, who contend that English choirs should not be allowed to compete at the National Eisteddfod ! Of course they should not, if Wales is to have half a chance ; and as matters stand at present, the only satisfaction which Taffy gets from the contests is that of finding fault with the adjudicator who dare award a prize to the vile Sassenach. The whole fact of the matter, as every impartial mind knows only too well, is this. The Welsh, though they may sing their mournful hymns in a minor key at street corners, are not in any high sense musicians. Any attempt to train a given number of the sons or daughters of the Land of Song only ends in confusion. They have not the mental balance, nor the ear, nor the sense which, with other people, is termed “common,” to enable them to derive any benefit from training as conducted at present, and, as in their bardic department, their musical ability is entirely imaginary. This, I have no doubt, will be considered a serious libel against what the Welshman regards as his crowning and distinctive glory. But if my readers desire to test the truth of the statement they may inquire for themselves. Let them remember the great debacle of seven or eight years ago, when the Welsh choirs—as usual—were so hopelessly beaten by the despised Saxon, and when consternation and indignation reigned in hill and vale, and the judges were verbally pilloried by the combined forces of

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every chapel and "Methodist Te Parti" of the land. It was then that the Archdruid (with uncommon wisdom) was bold enough to tell his compatriots that the prizes in such contests were for those who were not too proud to learn, and that the victory of the "foreigners" was due to the better training that the latter had received. And though he warned his countrymen to pull themselves together if they wanted to hold their own, things are still just as they were before; his words have not yet soaked through the Welshman's hide of conceit, and we have, and shall always have to the end of the chapter, the great National Eisteddfod of Wales fostering mediocrity, and hindering any progress that may be possible in the very art in which Taffy claims distinction.

I will admit that Welsh choirs do occasionally earn for themselves a notoriety of a sort, and the members of them often find that singing is a pleasanter and more profitable occupation than that of mining. But let me remind these wandering minstrels that they are only a handful among hundreds of other strolling musicians who tramp the earth for a livelihood, and that if they were pitted against the choirs of other countries we can only assume that they would have to take an even lower place in the world's estimation than they do at their own Eisteddfodau. We are told that this or that Welsh choir has been commanded to sing

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before the King, and so forth ; but, with his abounding good nature, His Majesty King Edward VII. will endure anything for the sake of his people. He will listen to niggers' "tom-toms," entertain savages, and suffer a Cymric choir to bellow and shriek at him, with equal composure and goodwill. We are often told, too, of the great successes which attend Welsh choirs on their visits to America ; but here again, that which Taffy takes to be honour is a fleeting reputation of a purely visionary kind. Just lately, for example, we saw in a London paper the heading "Great Success of a Welsh *Teetotal* choir in America." But, instead of giving us any reliable information as to the Americans' estimation of Welsh choir-singing, the paragraph mentions, as quite the most important part of the affair, that all the Welshmen refused the wine Mr. Roosevelt offered them when they sang before him at the White House ! It is inferred, too, that the members of the choir would much have liked to partake of the sporting President's generosity, but that before they left Wales they had to be "sworn to teetotalism !" No doubt a "Welsh Teetotal Choir" is a curiosity likely to draw as well as a Barnum freak ; but the success it attains upon such an advertisement does not say much for the singing part of the programme, and the incident only provides us with another sample of the Welshman's deceit, for to parade as a teetotaler abroad, so as to have the

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wherewithal to indulge in an "eternal spree" at home is anything but honest and straightforward. A reputation thus earned is not an enviable one.

Furthermore, if any one should still doubt my verdict upon the musical ability of the Land of Song, he may be reminded that Wales has rarely, if ever, produced a single really great singer such as the uninitiated might have expected of her. She cannot boast of a single composer of note except the late Dr. Parry, who was a musician of genius, though he did not succeed in obtaining a reputation commensurate with his deserts, and Mr. Edward German, who does such good work in opera, and who is thought to be of Welsh descent. A few attempts have been made by Welshmen to bring out dramatic compositions of a nature which might become popular with the Welsh people, but all have signally failed. The only opera, in fact, based on Welsh romance which seems likely to be attended with any success has been written lately—but it is by an Englishman! When do we ever hear of Welsh compositions being performed at the Eisteddfodau?

In instrumental music Taffy would be absolutely unknown save for the "Brass Band Competitions" which take place, for preference, on Good Fridays. And any one who has ever heard a Welsh "male-voice choir" sing would scarcely be likely to be so

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indiscreet as to get within range of one of these Brass Band contests; for of all the atrocities perpetrated by man under the name of music, these are the most diabolical. No words of mine can describe the outrages committed by these blatant, often beer-soaked, performers upon the ears of cultured men and women.

Whatever the Welsh harp may have been once upon a time, we know that it is to-day as extinct as the Welsh goat. It does not make enough noise for modern Wales; there are no prizes to be wrung out of it, and its mournful twanging of the "National Airs" of the Land of Song now only accompanies the mutterings of those blind beggars who haunt the seaside towns of Wales, or wherever the English visitor may be found. Thus we find that even the beloved harp, the national musical instrument of the Cymric people, would be seldom, if ever, heard, were it not for the beggars who are sustained by the coppers of the despised Saxon.

It must not, however, be imagined that the visitor always appreciates this national instrument. Quite recently, for example, loud complaints were made to the Council of a well-known seaside town in Carnarvonshire against the playing of the harp on the promenade. The complainants were visitors, who said that unless the "monotonous playing" and "perpetual tinkling" of the harpist ceased, they should not visit the town again. This very

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naturally raised the indignation of many patriotic Councillors. "Fancy the harp, of all instruments, being thus condemned as a nuisance." But the "common sense of most" prevailed. Were not they—the Councillors—bound to take heed unto the visitors' demands (excepting in cases of "Sabbath observance"), and were not they the representatives of the townspeople, who literally exist on the strangers' gold?—though the fact is not openly acknowledged. So, after much ill-feeling and resentment, the patriots, or at least the majority of them, were constrained to pocket their pride and order the removal of the poor old harpist and his offensive harp. He could go elsewhere—anywhere—so long as he did not interfere with the visitors' peace of mind, and "exasperate" those who came to Wales for rest and recreation, by his depressing, unmusical jingle.

The instrumental music of Wales may be summed up very briefly—there isn't any. The few summer bands at the watering-places are almost entirely composed of aliens, and there seems to be in the large towns a total absence of that orchestral and chamber music which is so large a factor in the life of our English cities. At the Lancashire musical festivals we may hear amateur orchestras competing and playing good music too. Why is this not possible in the Land of Song and heaven-born musicians? The answer is simple—our friend the Welshman will

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not take the trouble to do anything that needs sustained effort. Satisfied with mediocrity, and full of conceit, he has become a law unto himself, and an object of contemptuous pity for all true lovers of music.

CHAPTER IX

“JUMP-TO-GLORY JANE”

SO easily is the Welsh mind upset by emotion of any kind that whole families of Taffies can be swept off their feet by a singing meeting, or hypnotised into a condition of utter irresponsibility by the ravings of any ill-educated individual in black who has the presumption to call himself a preacher. But the most overwrought crowd of Welsh people that ever suffered from a too great indulgence in Eisteddfodic or similar excitements are sober-minded compared with those who got touched with the “revival” fever a few years ago.

It came about, as some readers will remember, like this. A Pale Prophet, with a Cymric fringe and “a message,” appeared at a moment when the spiritual condition of Wales was ripe for a religious mania of any kind. Manifestations had appeared to this Prophet, and he felt that he was a chosen vessel elected to save his people from perdition. Thus he went abroad preaching the “Jump-to-Glory” gospel, and proselytising the heathen, who were reduced to such a condition of flaccidity

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through an excess of religious hysteria that they could not help themselves. And many damsels who were very fair ministered unto him. The result of this mission was that every man, woman, and child whose mental balance was not firmly set in granite became convulsed with spiritual fervour. They were literally "possessed," only, instead of seeing devils and blue snakes, they believed they felt (and saw, according to some) the direct influence of a Divinity.

And so highly contagious was this fever that it spread like an epidemic of sheep-scab from fold to fold, until even the uttermost parts of Wales were affected. Thousands flocked to do homage to the Pale Prophet, who would sit in silent thought before them until the emotion pent up in the crowd, which waited nervously, anxiously, for a "sign," would burst its bounds and send every vestige of self-control to oblivion. If you had looked in upon one of these congregations you would have seen before the immovable, speechless Prophet women shrieking on the floor, and pouring out confessions of sins between the intervals of praying, weeping, and laughing. Men would be wrestling in mad anguish with ghostly enemies, dancing epileptic jigs, or throwing themselves down to bite the dust of self-abasement. Others you would have heard speaking with "unknown languages," and pointing with trembling fingers to invisible "tongues of fire." The whole company

② ② “Jump-to-Glory Jane”

would be a swaying, nervous mass of hysterical humanity, shouting, praying, singing, giggling, wailing, and snivelling, which the Pale Prophet regarded with the same inflexible, sphinx-like stare. And not until every being in the crowd was reduced to a condition of acute nervous prostration, madness, or hysteria—call it what you will—would the revivalist relax the coils of his hypnotic power, and harangue the people with, “Who will come and be one of Us?” etc. Of course every hand would be immediately stretched out, a sensation of relief would settle over the agonised throng, the Pale Prophet’s marble face would slowly melt into an angelic smile, and every soul would be “saved.”

Now, the Welsh religious enthusiasts rather patted each other’s backs over this revival, which they appeared to think was something peculiarly their own. They began to imagine—most of them so imagine still—that they were really The Elect, and that this Pale Prophet was none other than a Messiah sent for their final redemption. A few wise men, however, stood aloof, for they remembered Theudas and Judas of Galilee (not to mention more modern “prophets,” who are legion), and the good advice given by Gamaliel, who said, “If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought.” And the Welsh revival has come to nought. In a few months all the ravings of the Prophet’s converts have been put to silence; the

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“Corybantic Christianity” of their leaders has lost its ardent glow, its contagious enthusiasm ; the froth of that excessive debauchery in spiritual emotionalism has proved as evanescent as it was unnatural ; the fever of those wild dances and delirious aberrations has passed away, though its deadly marks remain to tell of the havoc it has wrought. It may be true that a minute proportion of the “miserable sinners” who pleaded forgiveness, and the rest, at the feet of the Prophet, Immaculate and Pale, have continued in the right way ; but the religious enthusiast in Wales to-day does not tell you of the thousands who, having been temporarily proselytised, have, since the subsiding of the excitement, become infinitely more debased than they ever were before. And there is not the slightest doubt that if a fair balance-sheet of work done by the revival could be drawn up, it would show a very heavy amount on the wrong side. But the Welsh leaders of Nonconformity know better than to take a religious census to-day, because they are only too well aware how unfavourably it would compare with a similar census of two or three years ago. It goes without saying that a people like the Welsh, who have not a scrap of humour, who are intensely emotional, and of inferior mental ability, would, as soon as the momentary restraining influence which held them in check was removed from them, fall from that giddy pinnacle of unrestrained exalta-

② ② “Jump-to-Glory Jane”

tion to which they had ascended, to the lowest depths of torpid indifference. Hence the anxious striving on the part of religious and political wire-pullers to-day to keep enthusiasm fanned by Eistoddfodau, preaching, and singing, and by priming them with a strong dose of that ever useful stimulant the cry of “Welsh Disestablishment,” whenever it is required.

To a student of psychology, the Welsh revival was interesting, and that is about all one can say for it. The Pale Prophet has disappeared, people no longer wander about mountain-tops at night with lanterns, and spin round like shot rabbits at the shadow of a passing bird. No longer are whole parishes sent into a panic because some overwrought individual has seen “a light ascending unto heaven”—a common occurrence when the railway porter is out to light the signal lamps! The grotesque picture of staid old men indulging in marionette performances, accompanied by the wails of a lachrymose showman with an uneasy conscience, and that of abundantly proportioned matrons solemnly indulging in the gyrations of a Pentecostal dance, are gone, and the only apparently enduring result of the whole affair is a very largely increased stock of lunatics in the asylums (and outside), and a morality which, if not of a high order before, is infinitely worse now. There is not a shadow of doubt that Wales is to-day more immoral

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than she ever was before the revival, and statistics will prove that the seeds of this decadence fell upon rich soil in the days of that outburst.

Is there any one who knows the instincts of the Welsh Celt who need be reminded of the harm that may, and did, fall upon those impressionable, over-balanced young people who might have been seen on the hill-tops of Wales any night during the revival? Do not the records of the police-courts tell us of the licentious indulgences wrought by many of these pseudo-religionists in the hours of their mental collapse? Is it not common knowledge that hundreds of silly girls were ruined, as they have perhaps discovered since, by what they then believed was the direct intervention of some immaculate influence? Every impartial mind knows that these things were so, and that the number of illegitimate births recorded since the revival bears its own significance.*

In the same way, only in a lesser degree, the moral conduct of Young Wales is unloosed rather than improved by the Eistoddfodau and chapel meetings, in which latter singing, politics, extempore praying, and other religious exercises, are inextricably mixed up. I have seen young men and women, boys and girls, coming home from a local

* Figures supplied by the Registrar-General show that there was an increase of illegitimate births amounting to 4·3 per cent. in 1904 and of 2·36 per cent. in 1905 over previous years.

② ② “ Jump-to-Glory Jane ”

Christmas Day Eistoddfod in a condition of absolute *non compos mentis*, brought about merely by the excitement engendered by a crowd, together with the peculiar, demoralising effect which music or other emotional features of the day have had upon their minds. And this condition of dementia will often possess these people for days afterwards. It is no common excitement of an hour, as psychologists have proved, but a deeply seated condition of delirium, which reduces those afflicted by it to temporary imbecility. They lose all sense of right or wrong, especially as regards sexual morality—never of a very high order at the best in Wales—so that every time one of these periodical outbursts of excitement comes round the stain left by the revival is only made deeper, and the Seventh Commandment cast a little farther into oblivion.

CHAPTER X

AS SPORTSMAN AND DRINKER

MOST people know what a "Welsher" is, and the few who do not are just as well left in ignorance. However, during my sojourn in Wales it was my good fortune to meet one or two honest sportsmen, men whom nature had endowed with a zeal untarnished by the hope of gain, who had souls above mean actions, "records," and "bags," and who were the very embodiments of manliness and fair-play. But these specimens are very rare in the Principality—hence my object in mentioning them, as one would the discovery of rattlesnakes in Iceland, or of Christianity in a Welsh Nonconformist chapel. But Taffy, speaking generally, is singularly destitute of those attributes which go to make the real sportsman. He is usually a poacher at heart, a shockingly bad loser, and the finer ethics of the chase are rarely to be met with in him. He will never shoot a rabbit running if he can creep up to it and "pot" it sitting. Like Mr. Punch's Frenchman who, on levelling his gun at a running pheasant and being called upon by his

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companions not to fire, exclaimed, " Oh, no ! I will wait till she stops," so the Welshman prefers to take his shots easily. In like manner, Jones will seldom wield a rod and line if he can use a net or adopt some other wholesale method of catching game fish. So devoid is he of any of the instincts of true sport that he will go to any length to satisfy his greed for pecuniary results, and even though one may see Welshmen in plenty sallying forth with rod and line, it by no means follows that the fish brought home have been taken with that weapon. The Taffy is nothing if not full of a cunning deceit.

It is as a poacher of fish that the Welshman excels. Dynamite, lime, spurge, the net, and the " otter," are all used with such deadly effect that there is scarcely a river or lake in Wales to-day that is not devastated by this type of human vermin. He is seldom brought to book for such crimes, because he knows very well how and when they may be perpetrated with tolerable safety. And it is the better part of valour with him to run away when danger threatens, so that he may live to poach another day ; and even if he should be summoned, the chances are that hard lying will win the day for him. Then, it must be remembered, many magistrates on Welsh benches to-day are just as prejudiced against English landowners and game preservers as are the prisoners before them, so that the result of a prosecution is generally such a

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trifling fine that the poacher cares nothing for it—especially if it is paid by some one else whom I refrain from mentioning. The Welsh police-court is known the world over as a very hotbed of perjury. Very often the guilty one, instead of giving a direct lie to the questions asked by the prosecuting solicitor, fumbles with what little conscience he possesses, and imagines he is escaping the crime by repeating with monotonous and exasperating persistency, “Indeed, I do not remember.” Sometimes it is varied by “I do not remember, indeed”; but one way or the other it is what one always expects to hear, and no one but a Welshman can make absolutely false declarations with so cool and splendid an air of assurance.

The worst feature of Welsh river poaching is the wholesale destruction it often causes. Not content with taking the larger fish by foul means, Taffy will destroy every fin, big and little—even the ova—for miles of water with one or other of those infernal methods already mentioned. And this is done by those despicable ruffians who are too lazy to work, merely for beer. Let any one with the best and most unselfish intentions in the world endeavour to protect the few remaining fish in Welsh streams, and an outcry will be made at once by those white-livered, short-sighted blockheads, who cannot see that ere very long there will be no fish left—not even for poaching.

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But of course Jones would not be Jones if he did not want to eat his cake and have it. He does his best to frighten away every English visitor from his seaside resorts by his sanctimonious habits, and by gagging their pleasures with the rigid application of Mosaic laws which he himself (except superficially) does not observe. Then he grumbles because his lodging-houses are empty, and because this produce or the other will not sell. It is just the same in rural districts. The perfidious Welshman wails a tale of woe because visitors do not come as they once came to his cottages and farmhouses for fishing or shooting. Of course they do not. Yet whose fault is it but his own? If he will kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, by depriving the visitor of the objects of his sport, he must go without the golden eggs: that's all. And while he continues his suicidal policy of devastating river and moor by the foulest and meanest possible methods, so long will the threadbare remnants of Welsh sport be left to the Welsh, and so long will their doleful cry of "bad seasons" fall on deaf ears. The Welsh fish poacher should, like his mutton, be "well hung."

A Welsh gamekeeper is almost an impossibility, for he can seldom resist being "squared" by any unscrupulous poacher who comes along. It seems to be quite beyond the ability of the Cymric mind to be loyal to its employer, which explains why

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every game preserver of any note in Wales employs Scotch or English keepers. This is not surprising, for, seeing that the Welshman has not yet learned the maxim "To thine own self be true," how can he be true to any other man ?

Like fairs, funerals, and other EVENTS, it would appear that a day's ferreting, or kindred sport, is undertaken by Taffy much more as an excuse for indulgence in liquor than on account of any delight in sport for its own sake. He thinks about filling up the largest bottle he can find, or two or three smaller ones, before he decides any other point in the programme of arrangements for the day, and he is never satisfied unless by a few hours before noon he is considerably elevated by frequent nips from the said bottle. That he shoots recklessly, and thoroughly enjoys himself, so long as any whisky remains, is only what might be expected, and by the end of the day his mental equilibrium is so completely upset by the excitement, and so utterly irresponsible has he become, that he drinks, drinks, drinks far into the night—as long as the law will allow, and often longer. Next day, and the next, perhaps, this valiant sportsman and his friends continue the "sport," the only difference being that they sink so deeply into the clutches of the whisky, the conviviality, and all the other familiar attributes of a general spree, that they remain all day lounging on the benches of the

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public-house from which the morning start was to have been made.

Although the Welshman is instinctively a beer drinker, whisky *—usually of the more violent description—seems to appeal to him more strongly as the “wine of sport.” And if we consider for a moment how susceptible his nature is to any mental excitement, and that physically he is not equipped by nature for the consumption of spirits, the effects of the fiery liquor he so copiously swallows on sporting occasions can better be imagined than described. And now that I am touching upon this subject it would be as well to remind readers that not only is Wales generally considered to be the most drunken country in the world, but Taffy has not got it in him to get drunk decently. He literally soaks himself in beer, invariably drinking as much as he can get—preferably at other people’s expense. When in his cups he becomes grossly familiar, and weeps hysterically at intervals. There is probably no country in Europe where public-houses do such a good “back-door trade” as in Wales. If you happen to be in the smoke-room of any one of them after dark you may hear an almost continuous “tap-tap” in the rear of the premises, and see bottles of all sorts and conditions brought into the

* The attempt made a few years ago to distil and popularise “Welsh whisky” was short-lived—a providential intervention for which we are grateful.

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bar to be surreptitiously filled. These, it is distressing to record, are too often the property of those holy ones of the community, men who "for a pretence make long prayers" against the drink traffic, against sport, and against anything that does not pertain to chapel-going. To such an extent is this secret drinking indulged in in Wales that the magistrates in many districts insist on all public-houses having gates, rather than doors, leading to their back-yards, so that the police may see what is going on within. Not that this sort of trade is illegal, but that the people who indulge in it are not particular as to "hours," nor to "Sunday closing," so long as they think they will not be found out. The back door, the little milk-can (every publican should keep a cow in Wales), the old woman's apron, and the darkness of night (publicans never light up their back premises if not obliged to), are, like chapel Bibles, the best friends to the teetotal drunkards, who in Wales are like grasshoppers for multitude in every parish.

The Welshman has no national sport or pastime, unless it is playing dominoes, or "rings," for beer, in the pot-house. Cricket is, comparatively speaking, unknown, not a single county having a team composed of Welshmen that could hold its own anywhere outside the Principality. Golf is entirely in the hands of English or Scottish people, and most other pastimes are non-existent. It is easy to

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understand this when one is reminded how the Nonconformist ministers and deacons are never tired of denouncing games of every description, how they crush any inclination on the part of the children to indulge even in such innocent recreations as "round-about" and "swing-boats" at village fêtes, and how they terrorise the adults with threats of excommunication if they dare to spend their leisure in amusement while the week-day chapel meeting is there for their entertainment and deliverance! Yet these pseudo-religionists, when once they get away to London, having changed their clothes for holiday wear, are the first to patronise—to an excess—the music-halls and other entertainments which at home they denounce as being dens of perdition and vice.

In football, Wales rather prides itself upon having the most successful combination in the Rugby Union. But if we grant that, let us never forget that Rugby football in Wales is confined to a very small area, namely, that part of the South or other industrial centres which owes its success entirely to English or other foreign enterprise. Nine-tenths of the Welsh people outside those comparatively small areas have never seen Rugby football at all. In the North, and a great part of the West and Mid-Wales, it is unknown, and there Association only, of a distinctly feeble and third-rate class, is played. Therefore I say that Wales

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as a whole cannot lay claim to any distinction in Rugby football, whatever the few thickly populated and distinctly Anglicised portions of the country may do.

On the whole, the Welshman as a sportsman and drinker—for both pastimes are inextricably connected—cuts a very sorry figure. He is too mean-spirited to attack his game with fair weapons, and, being so hopelessly devoid of humour, pluck, and enterprise, and so wrapped up with self-conceit, he is incapable of understanding—much less appreciating—any kind of reasonable recreation. For all-round bodily exercise he has no appreciation, and will never indulge in it unless obliged to ; but he is never tired of exercising his lungs, for he sings his lugubrious chants on all and every occasion, inflicting upon his hearers, uninvited, the most meaningless and unrestrained vocal efforts that ever ear of man suffered. So utterly wanting is he in discretion in matters of this sort, and so inflated with his own opinion of himself, that he never stops to consider whether you appreciate his company when thrust upon you in that way. It may be, for example, that you are staying at a sporting inn and would like to smoke a pipe with the natives of the district, from whom—so you imagine—some useful and interesting hints in matters pertaining to woodcraft may be learned. But nothing but disappointment awaits such a

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move on your part. In the first place, the Taffies assembled will be silent. Full of a cunning suspicion as to who you are, what you want, and whether you understand their language, they cast shy, uneasy glances at you. And not until they have absorbed all you have said to the landlord, not until you have proved your good faith, so to speak, by supplying them generously with beer, will they relax and become communicative. But alas ! just when you think that some entertaining topics relating to sport, or to the wild life of the neighbourhood, are about to be discussed, some one begins to sing, when all hope for further peace or conversation is at an end. But that is not the worst of it, for, unless your discretion suggests an immediate retirement to your own room, the beer-soaked singer may approach too near for comfort, and, in that familiar manner of his, bellow his blatant rhymes direct into your very face. I add this as a warning, so that any fellow-sportsman who happens to visit Wales will not be unwise enough to give Taffy credit for ordinary decency in behaviour, for he does not possess it. He is either uncomfortably suspicious in your presence, or intimate beyond the bounds of reason. It is safer to keep him at arm's length.

I have never yet met, neither have I heard of, any one who, as a sportsman in Wales, has had a good word to say for the Taffies. The very in-

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carnation of deceitfulness, they make any hope of ensuring one's sporting prospects impossible. They have been taught from their youth up, for so many generations that it has become engrafted with their blood, that poaching is no sin. The preacher, both in the chapel pulpit and in his capacity as political agent, drives it home to his hearers that the landowners and game preservers who "prey upon the poor" should be robbed without fear. But the fact that those few Welshmen who, inspired by English precept, have fought against the crushing tyranny of the chapel and shaken off the shackles of religious bigotry and their own self-importance, have proved themselves to be capable of displaying the true spirit of sport would appear to indicate that Taffy, in this respect, is not altogether beyond hope. But unless he makes a more strenuous effort than he has ever yet dreamed of to throttle that viper, whose coils have strangled his liberty and all opportunities of advancement—even in the comparatively obscure realm of sport—for so long his chances of proving his prowess in the field are indeed remote.

CHAPTER XI

SOME HINTS FOR THE ENGLISH VISITOR IN WALES

IF it should ever be your misfortune to have to spend Sunday in Wales, always get to windward when the chapels are disgorging the faithful. If you cannot manage to do so, turn up your coat collar, wrap your cloak more tightly about you, and hold your breath.

When in conversation with a Welshman, and he turns his back on you, or looks in the other direction, and begins whistling, don't be offended, because it is his way of looking you in the face. He knows no better manners.

It may be taken as an axiom that the more a Welshman "soaps you down" with his tongue, so much the deeper does he hate you in his heart.

Never employ a Welshman if you can possibly help it, for he will not only be dishonest (he can't help that), but he will slander you over all the countryside. This questionable form of entertainment is very dear to Taffy.

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It is most unwise to believe anything you hear from Welsh lips about your neighbours, especially if they are English.

Do not expect a Welshman to keep a promise. He does not know how to keep a promise as we understand the word. It is on account of the extravagant way in which he will promise to do this or that for you, without having the remotest intention of carrying his resolves into effect, that Wales has been called "The Land of Promise."

If you want anything done and must have a Taffy to do it, always allow him an hour for being late. To be up to time is practically an impossibility with him.

If you must have him, say to sweep a chimney, clean out the ash-pit, drown the kittens, or do such jobs not requiring skilled labour, always limit him to time and get the pay fixed beforehand.

It is best not to employ him at all—especially if he is a member of a chapel—for you will probably miss something after he's gone.

In the event of a Welshman's being "wanted," get another of his own breed to find him, and you will very soon have your man.

Never allow a Welshman to do ever so trifling a thing for you without payment. He is fond of pretending that he likes to do little neighbourly

Hints for the English Visitor

acts for nothing, but only because he can go and complain to his friends that you, being an Englishman, are either mean or poverty-stricken, and expect him to work for nothing.

Do not forget that the minutest details of your domestic life are the common property of the village gossips within a very few days of your settling in the district.

If the slandermongers cannot find anything about you or your history sufficiently interesting to give a sauce to their immoral appetities, they will invent something.

Never stay in an hotel if you have any respect for your reputation. Choose rather a homely "temperance" establishment, and if it is run by the widow of a Baptist minister so much the better.

If the family Bible, reposing on a wool mat on the window table of the best parlour, has a framed portrait of Mr. D. Lloyd George upon the top of it, you may safely consider yourself distinctly favoured.

At one time the Bible on the window table—Gladstone's portrait on one wall and Bunyan's on another—would have sufficed. But it has not been so since Mr. George has become the Cymric pet. How are the mighty fallen!

It does not matter how thirsty you may be, you must never go across the road in daylight

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for a drink. But you may sneak round by the back of the hotel on the pretence of ordering a cab or seeing the horses. You can drink as much as you like secretly, but never, if you value your reputation, go in at the front door of an hotel.

On the other hand, if you appreciate comfort, cleanliness, and good cooking, rather than a Welshman's good opinion, you will choose the best hotel which says, "English management: no Welsh employed," over the door.

Don't allow your wife or daughters out after dark in country lanes; you are in Wales, not England.

If you wish to gain a Welshman's respect, which is rare, and amounts to something like fear, put on your Sunday clothes, and pretend to know a good deal more than you do about him, but tell him nothing.

It is very easy to put the shudder of death into a Welshman by some little insinuation from which he may gather that you know something of those "secrets" with which his mind is always stuffed. It is about the only effectual way of disarming him of his intolerable conceit.

Keep Taffy at arm's length, or he will take liberties, and become familiar; not only that, remember, he spits copiously and dangerously when moved by any slight emotion. (He chews.)

Hints for the English Visitor

Welsh maidservants are usually beyond toleration ; you will, as a rule, be much happier if you have to light the fires yourself rather than employ one. They are, as a race, the incarnation of slovenliness, extravagance, deceit, and uncleanness. They are also among the most thriftless and wasteful of their class, and while they have a distinct aversion for soap and water, they appear to consume large quantities of the former, neat, daily, and look well on it.

Never, if you can avoid it, have a "general" who has been in service outside her own country—say in London or Manchester—for she will ever maintain a melancholy whine of discontent until she feels there is a chance of again turning her back on Wales. Like some other people who, having once known sin, must for ever go on sinning, so the Welsh girl who has ever tasted the delirious delights of a back street in Lancashire can never more endure the Land of her Fathers.

Do not, if you can help it, have a Welsh servant who is "walking-out" with a young man. As soon as she begins that kind of recreation it is wisest to dismiss her on the shortest possible notice, for you may be put to a great deal of trouble, and your house to disgrace. She can seldom be "walking-out" and remain pure.

This will be better understood by the English

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reader if he realises the fact that in rural Wales it is considered a dreadful ignominy for a married couple to be childless. Cautious Taffy, therefore, satisfies himself that the lady of his choice will become a mother before the marriage ceremony takes place.

Look out for skimped work, or no work at all, if you employ one of these wenches. They seldom dream of airing a room, never shake the doormat if it looks clean, never brush under a chair if the legs get in the way, never take the ashes out of the grate if they can be hidden underneath, never tell the truth if they think they can satisfy you with an ambiguous half-truth.

If the Welsh maid gets some paraffin in your tea, or you ladle the dishcloth out of the soup, it is not of the slightest use remonstrating with her. She only smiles, and wonders how they got there, and would continue smiling and wondering if the same little accident were to happen every day for a month.

If she is sucking an "extra strong" when waiting at table, and you tell her it is not good manners to do so, she will only deny ever having tasted an "extra strong" in all her life.

She is always ready to deny anything, and to shield herself behind any trumpery excuse or falsehood, generally because she does not know any better.

Hints for the English Visitor

Always bring your provisions with you, or get them sent from Liverpool or Manchester to your nearest station, if you live in rural Wales, for the grocers and butchers not only charge fabulous prices, but they have a habit of all calling on the same day, if not at the same hour.

For example, you need not be surprised to find three travelling butchers on your doorstep within half an hour of one another; and as each one tries to reach you before the other, the calls are made in the small hours of the morning.

Then, again, it is not of the slightest use to place any reliance in these men. If you depend upon them for your dinner, nine times out of ten you will be disappointed.

You will seldom do any good by being philanthropic, or even kind, in Wales, for your best intentions are usually misconstrued, and, to the perverted Cymric mind, bear a false impression. It is wiser to live your own life, and to leave "Wales to the Welsh."

Never forget that Taffy has a slippery, wholly unbalanced mind, and a very silvered tongue when he has occasion to use it.

No man covets his neighbour's goods with a more Jewish eye than does Taffy—more particularly if his neighbour is an Englishman. The remarkable similarity which exists between him and the Israelite no visitor to Wales has failed to observe.

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You need not suspect him of stealing anything of much value, because he is too much afraid of being found out, but to anything of a trifling nature, especially if some one else is likely to be accused of the crime, he is very partial.

Never act as touch-judge at a football match in Wales, for, if you do, you will suffer the indignity of being spat upon by the friends of the losing team who are on the other side of the rope. You can, of course, avoid much of the direct unpleasantness of this by wearing oilskins and carrying an umbrella ; still, it is not nice.

Always be prepared to find nearly three-fourths of the population of Welsh villages "a bit soft," *i.e.* harmless lunatics—the result of consanguinity and over-indulgence in religious hysterics.

Nor must you be surprised to meet in one week more men without noses (or with those appendages in the final stages of decomposition), and more old women with dewlaps, than you ever expected to see in a lifetime.

Do not waste your sympathies upon Welsh farmers who cry out about hard times and wet harvests and the like, for you will find, when you know them, that they would rather indulge in such recreations as funerals, fairs, and sporting sprees, than bother to take advantage of a fine day to save their hay or their wheat from rotting.

Hints for the English Visitor

If the lambs are perishing in the rain, if the thistledown is blowing across the country like snow, if the corn is growing green in the sheaves, Farmer Jones doesn't worry, nor does he let such things interfere with the pastimes mentioned in the last paragraph.

Never employ, or depend upon, a Welshman for any night work. He is so saturated with superstition and fear of the occult that he is wholly useless. Does not every one know that a Welshman always whistles when he goes past a churchyard at night—to show that he is not afraid !

Never allow your children to run the risk of being contaminated by the manners of Welsh children.

If you value your self-respect, avoid the Welsh "language" as you would sin ; it is plebeian and low.

Finally, when you are offered some home-made bread in Wales, it is desirable to think twice before taking it, for this reason. When the dough is kneaded it is by many wrapped in a cloth and placed *in the family bed, while the latter is still warm from its nocturnal occupants*—to "rise." This revolting custom is slowly dying out, but it is still prevalent. Ought not the man who invented "self-raising flour" to have his statue put up in every Welsh village?—the expense

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of the said monument to be met by voluntary contributions collected from among all those who, at any time, may have to eat bread that has been prepared in Mrs. Taffy's dear old domestic way !

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION—SOME TIPS FOR TAFFY

IF you ever hope for the redemption of your soul and body I strongly recommend to your notice the following paragraphs.

Supposing you are "One of Us," at Bethel, Ebenezer, Salem, or Rabshakeh, and Mr. Lloyd George should happen to be ascending to the pulpit, do not clap your hands and stamp upon the floor. Such conduct is unseemly, not to say irreverent.

Remember, it is not necessary to cheer if, during the sermon, such subjects as Disestablishment, the Education Bill, or the House of Lords are mentioned, nor is it essential that you should show your appreciation of, and loyalty to, the preacher by expectorating upon the floor, and ejaculating one to another such phrases as, "The Word of the Lord is in his mouth," "Well done, bachgen" (boy)! "The Lion hath roared, who will not fear?" etc., etc. It is profane.

They do not do such things in England, and if

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you ever become a well-to-do milkman or a draper (in England) you will yourself not do so.

It is equally bad form and irrelevant to sing on such an occasion, "Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau," which does not mean "For he's a jolly good fellow."

If you want to explain the precise condition of drunkenness which was enjoyed by Shon Siencyn on this or that occasion, do not put it in this way: "He wass ass ddrunk ass *the* lorrdd." Leave out the emphasis on the "the" if you must use the word; it sounds much better.

Forget your own language as quickly as you can. It is vulgar to use it in decent society. It is even more than that supposing you aspire to become a London milkman or draper—or perhaps a Welsh solicitor M.P., for then it is a very millstone about your neck. Civilisation abhors it.

For the same reason, never mention your own country nor its "history" more often than you can help.

You have done wisely in casting the leek away from you, and I take it that it is on the same principles that you suffer your historical relics to be disposed of as speedily as possible.

For example, you have dug up most of the ancient ruins of your country (many of which, however, being Roman, might have been an honour to Wales), and planted the sites with chapels embroidered with buff bricks. You are as speedily as possible break-

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ing up your cromlechs and selling them for road mending, or converting their uprights into gateposts, and we may presume, as a matter of course, that you will shortly dig up the bones of Glendwr, Charles of Bala, Goronwy Owen, and other "heroes," and start a trade in "heroical patent manure." A bad look-out this for D. L. G. and other mighty men of Gwalia.

You are to be commended upon your choice of London as the scene of your National Eisteddfod in 1909, for it shows that there is, at last, a tiny glimmering of sense permeating your Nonconformist conceit. You are beginning to feel that, after all, the "great festival" is losing a little of its glamour and zest in these modern days, and you naturally fall upon the broad shoulders of England for support and approbation.

Don't be disappointed, however, because England has not appreciated your funny little mummery-show, and sent you home again to mend your manners, your humour, and your culture. You will, perhaps, do better another time—if you take seriously to heart the contents of this book.

Seeing that it was probably of a Welsh sportsman of whom it was written: "He goeth forth in the morning, he returneth in the evening, he smelleth of whisky, and the truth is not in him," you have the obvious remedy of cleaning your character of such a reputation: Don't drink so much whisky,

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and remember that (outside Wales) there is a difference between truth and falsehood.

If you are an hotel-keeper, don't forget to make it your first duty to become on friendly terms with the local preacher and deacons. You will generally find them by the back door after dark. Their knock is a kind of feeble scratch, followed by a gentle cough. Don't forget the cow.

If a dejected outdoor preacher with a harmonium happens to pitch upon the beach of Rhyl, Aberystwith, or Llandudno, do not immediately fall upon him and cast him from the place, because it rather "gives the show away."

His straw hat, melancholy frock-coat, grey flannel trousers, and apologetic feet in brown canvas shoes, may not have such a sanctified appearance as your "Sunday black"; his "Sankey-Moody" hymns (as you call them) may sound a trifle skittish to your large and lugubrious ears, but he has, after all, an honest soul than you possess, for he does not preach politics under the cloak of religion, he does not violate every tenet of the Christian Creed by damning every person who does not pay him, and his deeds, whether they be for good or ill, are done at least straightforwardly under the honest light of day.

The very fact that you permit him to preach on Sundays upon your esplanades, *so long as he does not make a collection* or play Sunday golf, only proves that "filthy lucre" is at the bottom of the whole

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affair. The coppers which he gets should go to you or your chapel, the people who listen to him should listen to you, be tyrannised and persecuted by you, and have all their social, political, and religious liberty sucked out of them by you.

If you want to disprove this, if you want to show that your antagonism towards the outdoor preacher (a Christian-like attitude !) has not got its roots in the fear that your pews will be emptied and your pockets made lighter, give the wretch his liberty of speech and allow him to collect what coppers he can. Surely if you cannot stand an opposition show of that quality your Bethels and Rabshakehs and Zions cannot be worth very much.

If you desire to stop the running of trams and trains on Sundays, to prohibit cabmen plying for hire, and all that, it would be wiser to begin your reformation of the Sabbath at home, viz. by closing your chapels.

For who "shall receive the greater damnation," the man who permits the town-tired "visitor" to enjoy the consolations of some sweet country-side, or that electioneering hack, the dissenting "pastor," who makes a travesty of religion and a mockery of Sunday for the sake of his own selfish, political, and pecuniary gain, and that of the "Come and be one of Us" pack about him, of which he is whipper-in ?

You will do well to bear in mind that Wales is not the hub of the universe, and never will be.

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Without England your social and commercial value would not be worth a pound of bacon.

And without the Anglican Church, compared with which your Nonconformity is a mere weed of mushroom growth, the spiritual welfare of Wales (I do not mean that wonderful mixture of politics and preaching, hypocrisy and hysterics, which you call religion) would be in a very sorry plight indeed.

Some day, perhaps, when you have shaken off the fetters of religious tyranny, when the scales have fallen from your eyes and you can look back and see clearly through those long dark centuries of time during which you bore the yoke of persecution, and suffered any unscrupulous humbug to congest the very arteries of your liberty and conscience, you will regret your impotency and wonder why you did not make an effort, while there was yet time, to smash that image with the feet of clay before which you stooped for so long.

After the very obvious suggestions made in this and other chapters it is not necessary for me to recapitulate and again remind you of the great cloud of oppression which, borne by your political-religious leaders, hangs over you. It is a cloud that is falling rather than lifting. Indeed it would have completely submerged your whole race long ago were it not for a few bolder spirits whom, in your ignorance, you scornfully call "Anglicisers."

Do not leave the thinking over of these things

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to other people. Think, and see, and act, for yourself. Be no longer like a silly marionette pulled this way and that by your Nonconformist leaders. Show the world that you have a little independence left, that the leeches have not sucked you quite dry.

And, above all, slay the JABBERWOCK OF DECEIT, which for too long has shadowed your race in the eyes of every nation of the world, and *Anglicise yourself* as speedily as you can.

It will never be possible for you to be quite equal to an Englishman, but you may make him your ideal. By so doing you may, perhaps, in course of time realise the awful misfortune of having been born Welsh, and endeavour, for the sake of others as well as of yourself, to forget it.

If that does not take the conceit out of you nothing else ever will.

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The novel has the merit of being historically accurate, and gives a vivid picture of the France of the Period, while the warfare between the Catholics and Huguenots is dealt with in a series of exciting incidents and battle scenes, in which the exploits of the generous and chivalrous Protestant leader Montbrun—rescued from the dusty pages of de Thou and d'Aubigné—are presented to the reader for the first time.

The Ghost Pirates.

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON.

Author of "The Boats of the 'Glen Carrig,'" "The House on the Borderland," etc., etc. With a Frontispiece by SIDNEY H. SIME.

"This is one of the most 'creepy' stories we have read for a very long time, and we advise people who do not sleep easily only to read it in the early mornings."—*Outlook*.

"This last book shows a remarkable advance on its predecessors, and places Mr. Hodgson high among those living and dead who have told tales of horror so well that we believe them."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"One of the finest ghost stories we have read for a considerable time, and the person who can read it sitting alone in the quiet hours of the night without feeling a tremor must be one of stout nerves."—*Glasgow News*.

"One of the most gruesomely realistic stories of creatures that haunt the sea that we have ever come across. There is power in every line. . . . A book to live very long in the memory of its readers."—*Hove Gazette*.

"There is no one at present writing who can thrill and horrify to quite the same effect. A very remarkable story told in a matter of fact manner that materially increases its 'grip.' The author particularly excels in the creation of 'atmosphere,' but he is also possessed of a vigorous style and a wonderful ingenuity in the concoction of terrifying details. A book of high literary quality."—*Bookman*.

"It is a marvellous crescendo, working steadily up to the most uncanny horrors that can be imagined. The book is more than thrilling; it chills one's marrow bones with horror at last."—*Bristol Times and Mirror*.

"Although the 'Ghost Pirates' is strongly-spiced meat that makes great call upon the digestion it will create an appetite for more."—*Scotsman*.

"Weird and fascinating is this strange tale of the sea."—*Literary World*.

1 CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

New Six Shilling Novels—continued

Strange Fire.

"CHRISTOPHER MAUGHAN."

SOME EARLY OPINIONS.

"And the sons of Aaron took either his censer . . . and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not."

"The characters are finely and strongly realised."—*Times*.

"'Strange Fire' comes as a refreshing breeze on a torrid day. A book of undoubted merit."—*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*.

"Some very remarkable things happen in Mr. Maughan's novel of clerical life."—*Sunday Times*.

Love Besieged.

CHARLES E. PEARCE.

Mr. Pearce, the prince among writers of serial stories, has at last been induced to write a novel specially with a view to publication in volume form.

The interest of this romance is concentrated around a single thrilling episode of the Indian Mutiny. The siege of Lucknow forms the pivot of the story. There is a vivid picture of life within the Residency during the siege—the loves and hates, the private lives of the men and women, going on as usual in spite of the harrowing surroundings. But above all things the story is an enthralling love romance.

Pretty Barbara.

ANTHONY DYLLINGTON.

Author of "The Green Domino," "The Unseen Thing," etc. With an original Frontispiece on art paper. [January, 1910]

Mr. Anthony Dyllington is steadily working his way to the front rank of novelists and as *The Outlook* said in reviewing his last novel "The Unseen Thing," the critics will do well to keep an interested eye upon this author. This new novel deals with a certain king who has made the beautiful wife of his premier his mistress, and recounts an extraordinary story of instinctive loyalty on the part of the premier, who, in spite of the shame and humiliation of his position, proves his devotion by an act of heroic self-sacrifice which brings the book to a close with a startling *dénouement*.

A Will in a Well.

E. EVERETT-GREEN.

Author of "The City of the Golden Gate," "Co-Heiresses," etc.

[Ready Spring, 1910.]

This double-threaded mystery story of a hidden Will and false claim to a title and estates, is likely to take rank as one of the greatest successes of Miss Everett-Green. The crafty lawyer—having reason to believe that the old Lord Cotswold had hidden in a well a will making a bequest to Mary Mavoureen, the beloved of young Lord Cotswold—tries to beguile Mary into marriage with himself, while Anthony Gaskell Maine endeavours by means of a clever impersonation to pass himself off as Anthony Gaskell, Lord Cotswold. How the machinations of lawyer Lawley and Gaskell Maine affect the happiness of Lord Cotswold and Mary, and how their schemes are ultimately thwarted by a clever man from the West, we must leave the story to unfold.

New Six Shilling Novels—continued

The Submarine Girl.

EDGAR TURNER.

Author of "The Girl with Feet of Clay," etc.

In previous novels Mr. Turner has already proved himself possessed of an exuberant imagination and a keen sense of humour. These qualities are very evident in "The Submarine Girl." The title is a fantastic one, and the book itself is equally fantastic.

The story opens with a visit of the Czar to London, and the doings of an American who has just brought his submarine across the Cunard racing track, and introduces an Irish nihilist and a certain secret service officer. There is a wild scene at a Thames wharf—policemen, pistol shots, and piracy. Then the submarine begins another voyage; and with her goes "The Submarine Girl."

A wonderful voyage! There is first the affair with the destroyer, then the picnic in the Atlantic, then the mystery of the Zambetsky bomb, and then the meeting with the strange old-world ship. That ship, and its crew, and its cargo of gold, are important factors in the story. But the girl—with her vivid personality, her original outlook on life, and her witty talk—is the *leit-motif* throughout.

The Vortex.

FRED WHISHAW.

Author of "A Degenerate," "A Village Temptress," "A Royal Hoax," etc

This story deals with the period when Revolution in Russia, apparently in full stride towards its consummation in the ruin and misery of the country, receives a shock in the sudden resuscitation of the power of authority—lost for a while in the turmoil of howling Revolutionists. It is the period following the first Duma. A young Englishman, accidentally and almost unconsciously, is drawn by circumstances into the vortex. Once in contact with matters and persons connected with the War for Reform, he finds it impossible to shake himself free. He becomes involved in many exciting captures and escapes, and though siding with neither party, is in grievous danger of trouble with both. In the end circumstances are too strong for him and he is obliged to fly the country, which he does under romantic circumstances.

Edward and I and Mrs. Honeybun.

KATE HORN.

Author of "Ships of Desire."

[Spring, 1910]

This new novel by the author of "Ships of Desire," is a romance of married love. Lord Edward Estcourt and his wife live in Park Lane when the book opens, but, owing to the machinations of a fraudulent trustee, they are completely ruined, with the exception of £200 a year left to Estcourt by an old aunt. They therefore determine to go off to the wilds of the Suffolk country.

The vicissitudes of their life there with a charwoman and a gardener make very amusing reading. The maiden aunt of the young person of seventeen may read the whole story without a blush. There is a freshness and charm about it which eludes description.

1 CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

New Six Shilling Novels—continued**Golden Aphrodite.**

WINIFRED CRISPE.

Author of "Snares," "Corry Thorndyke," etc.

Sir Piers Mostyn, a middle-aged millionaire, offers two-thirds of his fortune to be cured of a mortal complaint. Ian Monkweirmth, an eminent surgeon, accepts the challenge. His undertaking is complicated by, at first an unwilling attraction, and later a reciprocated passion for the millionaire's young and beautiful wife—"Golden Aphrodite." Hence arises a psychological problem in which Monkweirmth is tempted by the imminent widowhood which he himself is striving to avert. Readers of the author's previous novels will find their expectations fully realized in this new powerfully written novel.

A Lady of France.

B. SYMONS.

[Ready January, 1910.]

This novel by a new writer is a powerful and absorbing romance of mediæval Paris. A master of detail, the author vividly realizes the past with a few deft touches, and the reader of the least imagination will find himself transported to the Paris of the Middle Ages, with its deep shadows of vice and crime, and its alleviating sunlight of chivalry and romance.

A Splendid Heritage.

MRS. STEPHEN BATSON.

Author of "Dark," "The Gay Paradises," etc.

[Ready Spring, 1910]

Mrs. Stephen Batson's new novel tells the love story of a fastidious and rather prejudiced young woman, a leader in county society, who falls in love with a millionaire in disguise. This young man comes avowedly from a lowly stock, and our heroine, who knows nothing about the millions, resents his intrusion into her acquaintance and his obvious devotion to herself. Dan Cupid's vengeance, however, is inevitable and fitting. Mrs. Batson has taken the opportunity of drawing vivid pen pictures of various types of the well-to-do "unemployed" who spend their days in ball-chasing and their nights at bridge. Her book is full of humour and witty delineation of manners and character.

Tropical Tales.

DOLF WYLLARDE.

The difficult art of telling a short story well has no better exponent than Dolf Wyllarde at her best, and "Tropical Tales" is an excellent presentation of her art.

Miss Wyllarde's "Tropical Tales" is a demonstration of the influence of climate upon action and character. As the name suggests, they are mostly staged in Southern hemispheres. Some of them, however, are English, but the influence of warmth is still present, and in each case the temperature is recorded. The African stories are as daring as "The Story of Eden," and the West Indian as "Uriah the Hittite," or "Mafoota." There is even one that recalls "Captain Amuas."

1 CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

New Six Shilling Novels—continued

Lying Lips.

WILLIAM LE QUEUX.

[Ready Spring, 1910.]

"Lying Lips," the life-story of Jim Almond, the easy-going, good-hearted Englishman, but head of a gang of international thieves, and romance of his pretty daughter Iris, is an entrancing romance. Mr. William Le Queux, to whom the *Morning Post* has awarded the title of "The Master of Mystery," is at home when he writes of back-ways of life in London and on the Continent, and in this novel the reader will at once find himself plunged into a most remarkable and enthralling mystery, more complete than any which this popular writer has ever penned. Mr. Le Queux's personal knowledge of the ways and lives of foreign spies and criminals is so unique that on more than one occasion the Government have consulted him in confidence and sought his assistance. Hence no author is more qualified to write mystery stories than he, and in "Lying Lips," he is at his best, for he relates a romance which has all the verisimilitude of truth and which holds one breathless from the first page to the last. One knows that a portion at least of this life drama is truth, and one wonders which part is fiction, which fact.

Shoes of Gold.

HAMILTON DRUMMOND.

The Press unanimous. Brilliantly noticed by 35 leading critics, and by many as the best novel of 1909.

[Second Edition.]

EARLY PRESS OPINIONS.

"A most excellent romance, thoroughly interesting, extremely well written and worked out, and should win high favour with all lovers of spirited historical fiction. Very ingeniously has the author worked out his plot. A really fine tale. We heartily recommend it to all readers in confidence that they will not be disappointed."—*Daily Telegraph*.

"Mr. Drummond writes the historical novel with much talent; a busy, spirited story."—*Times*.

"A stirring picture of Eighteenth Century Court Life at St. Petersburg and Versailles."—*Truth*.

"A striking, vigorous, and charming romance,"—*Morning Leader*.

"The picture of the precarious Court life is vivid in the extreme, and makes the book one to read and remember."—*Observer*.

"A spirited historical romance, wonderfully well rendered."—*Guardian*.

Co-Heiresses.

E. EVERETT-GREEN.

Author of "The City of the Golden Gate," etc.

"Everett-Green gives us in this novel an opportunity of studying character in striking contrast. The girls who are the co-heiresses could not be more dissimilar; neither could the two men with whom they mate. The story, as do all Miss Everett-Green's novels, excels in its pictures of home life. No novelist of to-day can call up more realistically the atmosphere of an English fireside."—*Scotsman* [First Review].

1 CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

New Six Shilling Novels—continued

Love, the Thief.

HELEN MATHERS.

Author of "Comin' Thro' the Rye," "Gay Lawless," etc. (*Fifth Edition.*)

"A lively, ingenious, populous narrative in which the numerous people who centre round the seat of Sir Peter de Pepelpenne stand in various relations to the death by poison of that unlucky baronet, and his last will and testament. The heroine is of the old-fashioned, roughish, outdoor type which demands "Kit" as a Christian name; and has an excellent foil in Barbara Glyn who shines only at night. The great variety of the characters is indeed one of the attractions of the book."—*Times*.

"That Helen Mathers' hand has lost none of its cunning, her style none of its charm, is amply evidenced by her last novel, 'Love, the Thief.' There is a mystery that is exciting enough to keep you on tenterhooks so that once having begun the story you are fain to read on and on until the last page is reached."—*Daily Graphic*.

"We have read many tales of mysterious crimes, but none has kept its secret more securely or furnished more excitement than this."—*Daily News*.

"Miss Helen Mathers has chosen to make a voluntary exit from her career as novelist, and she does so with a particularly fine bow. 'Love, the Thief' is in its way as remarkable a performance as her first success, 'Comin' thro' the Rye.'"—*Westminster Gazette*.

Stolen Honey.

ADA and DUDLEY JAMES.

[Second Edition.]

EARLY PRESS OPINIONS.

"A skilful and attractive story."—*Times*.

"The plot proceeds in a surprising and splendidly theatric way."—*Dundee Advertiser*.

"It is most exciting, and the reader will not be likely to put down the book until the last page is reached."—*Literary World*.

"Effective, well-defined characters, crisp dialogue, and a pleasing ensemble."—*Globe*.

"A story with plenty of lively business and several strong and well-drawn situations."—*Scotsman*.

"An excellent story."—*Sheffield Independent*.

"A bright and original story."—*Morning Post*.

"Quite likely the reader will vote this one of the best novels of the season."—*Bedford Guardian*.

"A charmingly written novel, its outlook is virile and breezy; as readable a romance as one could wish for."—*North Mail*.

"There is sound sense as well as humour in this book."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

"It is a competent piece of plot building, but it also possesses atmosphere and character-drawing above the ordinary . . . Never for one moment loses interest or liveliness."—*Morning Leader*.

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"One of Miss Warden's best stories. It provides that gentle simmer of excitement and mystery which Miss Warden can keep going through 300 pages as cleverly as anyone."—*Times* (Literary Supplement).

"From a literary point of view, Miss Warden may almost be termed a veteran, but the originality, brightness and fluency of her pen remain undiminished."—*The Bookseller*.

1 CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

New Six Shilling Novels—continued

Troubled Waters. (Second Edition.) HEADON HILL.

"Mr Headon Hill's new Story holds the reader's interest from first to last without a break. It has verve, vividness, and virility, and few who begin it will be at peace until they have read it all."—*Scotsman*.

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"Those who like a stirring story will find it here."—*Nottingham Guardian*.

"There can be no doubt about it that 'Troubled Waters' is yet another triumph for Headon Hill. It is full of life and action, vigorous in treatment, and containing an excellent plot."—*Hove Gazette*.

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Those who can appreciate a wild, occult story of mystery and magic, of stolen jewels, of a man who, by the subjugation of all the passions, acquires supremacy of will to control men far and near to him, of a fascinating woman who tries in vain to escape from his spell, until love of another at last enables her to do it, will find "The Flame Dancer" a story of exceptional interest.

"'The Flame Dancer' is a powerful romance that holds the reader spellbound from start to finish."—*The Dundee Courier*.

"Mr. Mathew's occult, fanciful romance is deftly constructed, and holds the attention from first to last."—*The Bookseller*.

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